



THE INDEPENDENT

ON SATURDAY

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INSIDE YOUR 5-SECTION PAPER

Christmas shopping: our mouth-watering 40 page guide
THE MAGAZINE



Frank Skinner: Watt a show at the power station THE EYE

Farewell Peter O'Sullivan. Hello Bjorn Borg
SPORT

TODAY'S NEWS

Second body 'lost' after Luxor massacre

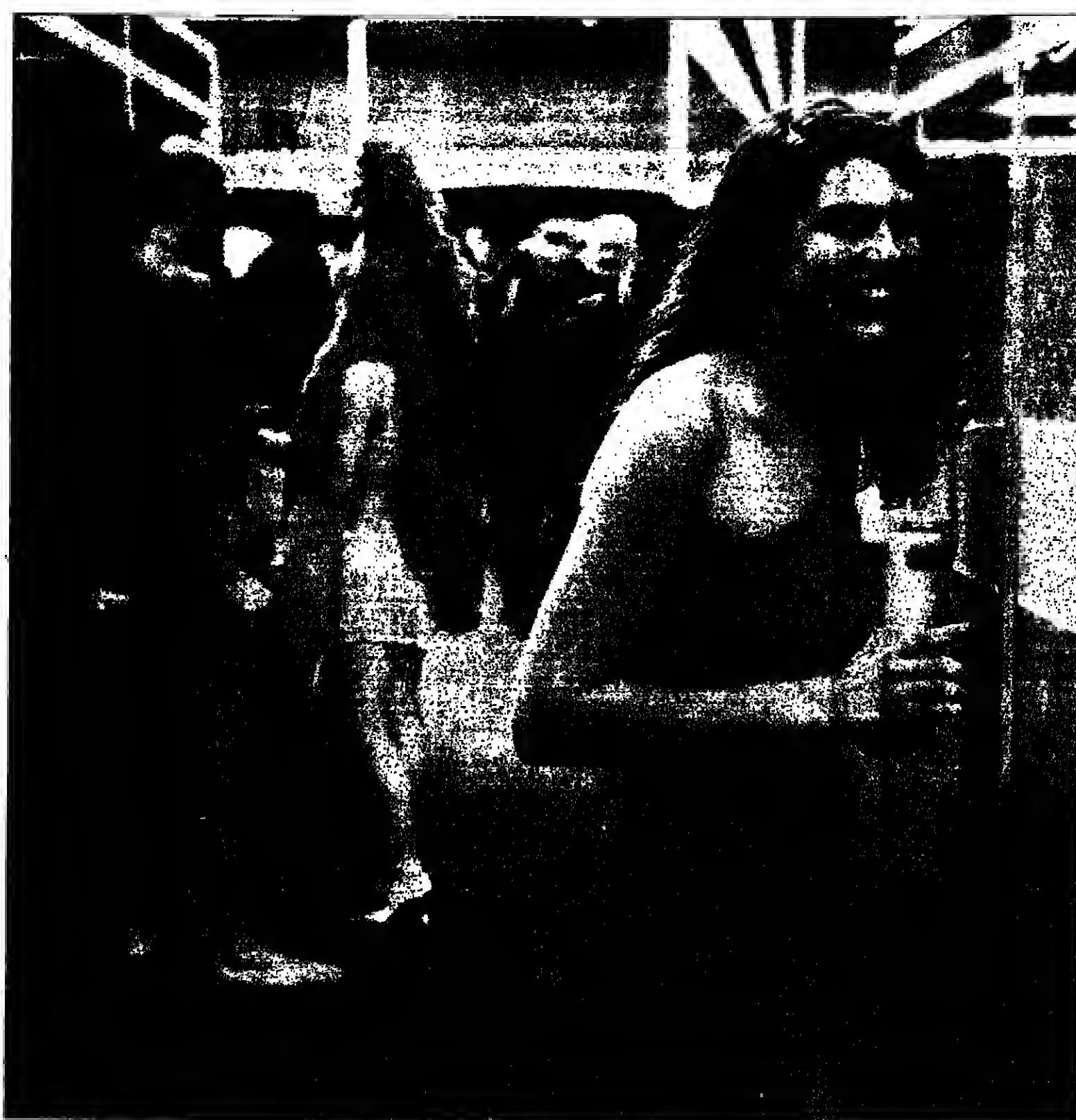
A second body from a family of British victims of the Luxor terrorist attack had disappeared on its way home. A coroner admitted he had "no idea" what had happened to the body of Karina Turner. A body flown back to Halifax, West Yorkshire, had been believed to have been that of the 24-year-old air stewardess. But a West Yorkshire coroner, James Turnbull, said yesterday that dental records proved the body was not hers. He said it was possible that her body may already have been buried or cremated. It followed a similar mix-up earlier this week, when it emerged that the body identified as that of Ms Turner's mother, Joan Turner, was in fact that of a Swiss citizen. Her body has been located in Zurich. Yesterday Mr Turnbull described the situation as "total chaos" and said relatives were suffering "indescribable distress". Page 3

Class sizes are up again

Class sizes in state schools rose again last year to 18.6 per pupil, figures show, slightly up on the previous year and in stark contrast to the figure of 17.3 pupils per teacher 10 years ago. As the figures were released, the Government announced that it is to try to recruit more primary teachers, partly to help fulfil Labour's manifesto commitment to cut class sizes for five-, six- and seven-year-olds to 30 or below by 2002, a promise which, despite yesterday's bad news, it remains committed to. Page 8

The Therapist of Oz

MGM, one of the world's biggest and best-known film studios, has asked a Hertfordshire therapist to endorse its classic children's film *The Wizard of Oz*. The psychotherapist, Bernie Wooster, says it "makes excellent viewing for responsible parents who are interested in the healthy emotional development of their children." He insisted yesterday: "This is not a gimmick", and gave examples of other films which had helped patients, including a depressed businessman who was convulsed with sobs when he saw Whoopi Goldberg in *The Color Purple*. Page 5



'Nothing as tawdry as sex': One of the participants in the Erotica Show at Olympia, west London, yesterday

Photograph: David Rose

Erotica show gives Britain a first

The Erotica show that opened at Olympia yesterday may not have been the Full Monty but it was certainly more than Britain had ever seen before.

"It's a first for this country," said organiser Brian Wiseman who insists the three-day affair is all about the erotic and nothing as tawdry as sex. Others, such as the woman from Surrender armoured clothing, agrees: "You know the fetish scene is becoming very mainstream these days. You see rubber in the High Street." Well, you certainly saw it yesterday at Olympia, as well as almost everything else. "I think England should loosen up a bit," said one 26-year-old. "We could use a little less fox-hunting and a little more of this." Mr Wiseman says that is his idea too and that Glasgow could be the next stop.

— Ann Treneman

After 500 years, MPs vote down foxhunting

A huge Commons majority of 260 for the Bill to ban foxhunting was hailed last night by the MP who is sponsoring it as "a moral mandate" to get rid of the sport in Britain. Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent, says Tony Blair privately gave MPs a clear signal there will be a change in the law before the next election.

The centuries-old tradition of foxhunting was "a thing of the past" last night after the Commons voted by 411 to 151 to ban hunting with dogs. Foxhunting, which dates back 500 years but which began in its familiar form in the early 1800s, is unpopular among voters but has strong support in pockets of the country, and the battle is not yet over.

With the opposing camps digging in for a bloody parliamentary struggle, it could require the reform of another, even older, institution, the House of Lords, to make foxhunting illegal.

The MPs' vote sets the House of Commons on a collision course with the House of Lords, where hundreds of Tory backwoodsmen and hereditary peers are expected to come to

the aid of the hunting lobby to kill the Bill, promoted by the Labour backbencher Michael Foster, before it reaches the statute book.

Tony Blair was hundreds of miles away visiting British troops in Bosnia but he issued Labour MPs with a private note, emphasising his support for the Bill, and promising that it would be kept "open to review for the future" — a clear signal that the Government may not, after all, let it die. The Prime Minister has been under intense pressure from friends and allies on both sides of the argument; and earlier briefing had suggested the Bill would get little Government help.

Now, though, ministerial sources confirm the options include using the Parliament Act to enforce the will of the Commons on the Lords after a delay of a year. A Cabinet member confirmed that another option would be to allow a backbench amendment to a future Home Office Bill on criminal justice to put an end to foxhunting on to the statute book.

The Home Office minister, George Howarth, who wound up the five-hour debate, warned the Lords that if they sought to frustrate the will of the Commons they would be hastening the end of the voting rights for the hereditary peers, which the Government is pledged to abolish. "If the House of Lords wish-

es to take the House of Commons on over this issue, let them do so," said Mr Howarth.

The Government may have to take away the voting rights of the hereditary peers before pushing through a Bill which included a ban on foxhunting.

The Government resisted demands to give the Bill time to ensure that it becomes law, but the Prime Minister told his backbench MPs: "I very much hope that opponents of the Bill would respect the will of the House and not seek to frustrate its passage by means of procedural delays."

"It is those in this House and in the Lords who seek to sabotage the Bill, not this Government, who will be preventing this private member's Bill reaching the statute book. We are keeping this matter open to review for the future."

Mr Blair is anxious to avoid being accused of breaking election promises over banning foxhunting, and Mr Foster was careful to stress that the Prime Minister had fulfilled the manifesto commitment to allow a free vote with yesterday's debate.

The noisy and impassioned debate over the Bill crossed party lines. The highlight came when Labour MPs cheered and applauded a sparkling speech by Ann Widdowcombe, the former Tory prisons minister, and a supporter of the Bill.

Given a hero's welcome by

joyful supporters outside the Commons, some of whom were weeping with joy, Mr Foster said: "The size of the vote really indicates that this is going to become law."

"They will try (to sabotage it) but we have the moral mandate. The world now knows that in this country, the days of hunting are doomed."

Tony Banks, the sports minister and the most outspoken supporter of the ban on foxhunting in the Government, told *The Independent*: "My feeling is that we will see the end of foxhunting during the course of this Parliament."

"This vote today and the expressions of support throughout the country will assist us in making sure that happens. I can well understand why on this occasion no guarantees (of Government time) can be given but this will give a clear steer to the Government this is something we have to do."

The Union of Country Sports Workers and Country-side Alliance, which had organised a vigil and meeting at the Queen Elizabeth conference centre, had prepared the 600 people attending for a defeat. Many were expecting a greater majority.

This was stressed by Labour peer Baroness Mallalieu, who told them: "It is the bad news we have been waiting for but it is not a bigger majority than we've had before."

Why Does Your Memory Fail You?

A WORLD-FAMOUS memory expert, who has trained industrialists, trades unionists, businessmen, professional men, salesmen, housewives and students to improve their memories, once said:

"Many people are embarrassed by a poor memory, and find difficulty in concentrating; whilst others realise that they lose business, academic and social opportunities not only because they cannot remember accurately everything they see, hear or read, but also because they cannot think or express their thoughts clearly, logically and concisely. Some seek advice, but many do not, mainly because they believe their memories cannot be improved."

Simple Technique

And yet, he went on to explain, he has devised a simple technique which can improve even the poorest memory. What's more, it can even work like magic to give you added poise, self-confidence and greater personal effectiveness. Everyone owes it to himself to find out more about this method.

Rapid Results

According to this remarkable man, anyone — regardless of his present skill — could, in just 20 minutes a day, improve his memory and concentration to a remarkable degree. For example, you need never for-



Forget names, faces?

get another appointment — ever! You could learn names, faces, facts, figures and foreign languages faster than you ever thought possible. You may be able to improve whole books on your memory after a single reading. You could be more successful in your studies and examinations. At parties and dinner you may never again be at a loss for appropriate words or entertaining stories. In fact you could even be more poised and self-confident in everything you say and do.

Free

To acquaint all readers of *The Independent* with the easy-to-follow rules for developing skill in remembering, we, the publishers, have printed full details of this interesting self-training method in a fascinating book, "Adventures in Memory", sent free on request. No obligation. No salesman will call. Just fill in and return the coupon on Page 8 (you don't even need to stamp your envelope), or write to: Memory and Concentration Studies (Dept. IDM67), FREEPOST 186 Manchester, M60 3DL.



48 WEATHER Time Off, page 2
TELEVISION The Eye
CROSSWORDS Time Off, pages 16 and 26
Web address: <http://www.independent.co.uk>

COLUMN ONE

Game's up as toy firm targets bigger boys

The Fat Controller had a middle-aged spread. Thomas was most likely tanked up on lager, and the Flying Scotsman was probably speeding home to play with his train set.

We had always suspected that toys were not for the boys, but yesterday Hornby Railways confirmed it: For years they have been making train sets not for little lads, but for their fathers.

The admission, which will make many a doting dad blush, was made by the company yesterday when it also admitted targeting Scalextric at men and not their sons.

Announcing its half-yearly results, the company said its marketing strategy now involved aiming for serious enthusiasts with serious money - mature adults. They are the ones who can fork out on lengthy, complicated stretches of track, decorative stations and elaborate landscaping.

While the image of the toy railway (below) is still one of wide-eyed youngsters in shorts and 1950s haircuts, the reality is quite different. The boys might get a look-in for five minutes, but they soon get elbowed out of the way by dad.

Peter Newey, the company chairman, said most railway sets are no longer sold through toy shops but through model stores where adult modellers and collectors congregate.



"How do you define a toy?" he asked. "In the main they are bought by mature men, not by children. They go to collectors or enthusiasts who put them into model layouts."

"Most of our sets are bought by men for their sons in anticipation of playing with them themselves. I am sure."

The models have changed as much as the marketing strategy. Nostalgic 14-year-old schoolboys can still buy the Flying Scotsman, but the most popular train is the Inter-City 125. And, in deference to privatisation, it now comes in the livery of Virgin and GNER.

Your Thatcherite realist is able to buy a gleaming model of the Eurostar, although it is not clear whether the company makes slow stretches of track for the imaginary British side and faster rails for the French section.

For serious anoraks, privatisation junkies or plain old sad purists, there are also models of suburban Networker carriages done out in the livery of local stretches like the Chiltern Line.

Scalextric, too, is being aimed at the more serious collector of longer, more complicated sections of track. The models are produced with meticulous attention to detail - in all but one respect. The company would never carry tobacco advertising on its Formula One cars, not even for a £1m fine from Bernie Ecclestone.

"Absolutely no way," said marketing manager Simon Kohler. "We stopped that round about 1972 with the JPS [John Player Special] car. Last season, there were some cars carrying very subtle advertising, like an R with question mark for Rothmans. We wouldn't even do that. It's much too far the mark."

It is the trains, however, that still cause the hearts of many a middle-aged man to miss a beat. And they are realistic in more ways than one: they even reflect the financial ups and downs of life in the public transport private sector. Hornby's pre-tax profits fell from £1.1m a year ago to 973,000 in the half year to 30 September. Sales were down from £13.1m to £11.1m.

— Steve Boggan
Business, page 26

PEOPLE



Anna Friel and Ewan McGregor, who will play Lisa and Nick Leeson in the forthcoming film

'Trainspotting' star gets set to break the bank

Rogue Trader, the £8m feature film based on the rise and fall of futures trader Nick Leeson, has begun filming with *Trainspotting* star Ewan McGregor playing the man who brought down the world's oldest merchant bank.

The film, which will open early in 1999, is based on Leeson's best-selling autobiography of the same name. McGregor stars opposite Anna Friel as his wife Lisa in the movie charting his loss of £850m, which triggered the collapse of Barings Bank, his flight from justice and his six-year jail sentence.

The stars are said to have adopted "Essex-style" accents for their roles, and Friel has substituted her trademark long brunette hair for Lisa Leeson's short blonde bob.

The real-life couple wed in Kent but producers used Pembroke Lodge in Richmond Park, south-west London, for the scene in which the couple marry, which was shot this week.

Filming moved to Gatwick airport yesterday and stays in and around London until Christmas, when it moves to Malaysia and Singapore, where Leeson met his downfall.

Leeson, 29, ran up enormous trading losses at Barings Bank in Singapore, and finally fled. But he was arrested, returned to Singapore, and imprisoned.

Producer Paul Raphael said: "It is rollercoaster of a film about a streetwise guy who just got way out of his depth. Anyone can imagine themselves as Nick Leeson, and it contains classic dramatic elements," he said.

"Ewan is perfect for this part - it's the sort of role Gary Oldman could have played 10 years ago. He is a contemporary lad. Anna is going to be a huge star, she is tremendous."

Lisa and Nick Leeson married in 1992, but by February 1995 their relationship was plunged into disaster. Recent reports have suggested that Lisa Leeson, 29, no longer visits her husband regularly.

"Our story is romantic in many ways. If things had gone a little differently for Nick and Lisa they might be very happy and very rich by now," Mr Raphael said.

The rogue trader's decision to publish his autobiography caused concern that it would glamorise his crime. The possibility that the film might do the same did not appear to worry the producer. He expressed hope yesterday that a shorter sentence might ensure his presence at the opening.

"I hope we can get Nick along to the premiere - it would be wonderful," Mr Raphael said.

— Jojo Moyes

Dying ex-serviceman denied right to sue MoD

An ex-serviceman suffering incurable lung cancer contracted after being exposed to asbestos dust as a Royal Navy engineer cannot claim compensation, three judges at Appeal judges ruled yesterday.

Lawyers acting for Ronald Quinn had argued that civilian employees of the Ministry of Defence are able to sue for damages and it was unjust that military personnel cannot. But Lord Justice Swinton Thomas said he "could see no reason" to change regulations barring servicemen from claiming against the Ministry of Defence for personal injury.

Mr Quinn, 65, of Holbeck, Leeds, who served from 1949 to 1956, is the first ex-serviceman to challenge whether the immunity clause of the Crown Proceedings Act applies to serving members of the forces who were exposed to asbestos dust. During his time with the Navy, he carried out service work on ships' boilers, stripping or removing lagging which contained asbestos. He was forced to retire from work in 1979 and in 1982 was diagnosed as having malignant mesothelioma. He is now seriously ill.

The Crown Proceedings Act, covering damages actions against the Crown, excludes members of the armed forces from claiming if it resulted from the condition of the "land, premises, ship, aircraft or vehicles" supplied by the MoD. The appeal judges ruled that Mr Quinn suffered his injury "in consequence of the nature or condition of the ship" and therefore his action fails. They also threw out an alternative argument that there was an employment contract between Mr Quinn and the MoD, which had acted negligently.

Lawyers for Mr Quinn are to petition the House of Lords in an attempt to challenge the judgment.

Countess Spencer hits back at divorce case malice claims

Countess Spencer hit out yesterday at claims that her divorce case against her husband was based on malice.

She issued a statement through her solicitors which described as "untrue" claims made by David Horton-Fawkes, Earl Spencer's business manager, that she was using the divorce hearing to make malicious allegations and to make money.

Mr Horton-Fawkes made his statement outside the High Court in Cape Town on Thursday. He said Lady Spencer "has been persuaded or advised to use this public forum and the protection of open court to make malicious and untrue allegations against Charles [the earl] for financial gain".

But in her statement, the countess said: "I simply wish to state in response to what is said by - or perhaps through - Mr Horton-Fawkes that it is in material respects quite untrue."

"My husband chose to sue me in South Africa for divorce and for

the custody of our four small children in South Africa, without warning, when we had been involved in negotiations through our English solicitors for many months, with a clear view to a divorce in England."

"My struggle before the Cape Town court is to have my future, and that of my children, determined by the law of the land where we were born and to which we shall return."

Earlier, one of the women with whom Lord Spencer is alleged to have had an affair leapt to the defence of the countess.

Sally Ann Lason said of Mr Horton-Fawkes's attack: "Well, it's his [Lord Spencer's] little sidekick, in his anemic lackey way, trying to justify the fact that this man who has over £100m won't write a little, tiny cheque to his wife."

"And then blaming the wife for going to court to get publicity, which is preposterous."

— Steve Boggan

UPDATE

HEALTH

Sex habits unchanged by fear of Aids

Four out of five sexually active adults in Britain say they worry about Aids to some degree - but less than one in five always practises safer sex, according to a survey.

Younger adults take the lead in safer sex while the over-40s mostly ignore the risks, the survey commissioned to mark World Aids Day on 1 December by Durex, the condom manufacturers, found.

Debbie Zadah, Durex brand manager, said: "People do seem to have heard the safer sex message but a very large proportion of them are not following any of the advice. Aids is a worldwide epidemic - no one can be really sure of a new partner's sexual history, and to have unprotected sex is an unnecessary risk to sexual health."

The survey found that more than nine out of ten people knew that HIV is a sexually transmitted infection but only a third were aware that chlamydia, which can lead to pelvic infection and infertility, is transmitted in the same way.

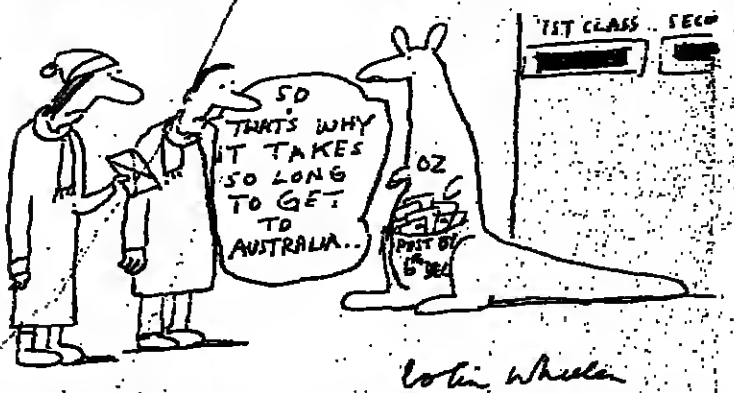
— Jeremy Laurence, Health Editor

ROYAL MAIL

Posting the seasonal message

Christmas cards travelling across the globe should be in the post by 6 December, the Royal Mail said yesterday.

Cards and letters being sent to addresses within Europe should be posted by 13 December to arrive before Christmas Day. Inland second-class



letters and cards should be sent by 18 December. For first-class mail the last posting date to be sure of pre-Christmas delivery in the UK is 21 December. The Royal Mail is expecting to handle more than two billion cards by 25 December. "The message, as always, is to post early and please remember to use the full address," said Royal Mail spokesman Mike Hilder.

HEALTH SERVICES

Mental hospitals provision slashed

The number of available beds in mental illness wards in National Health Service hospitals has dropped by almost 50,000 since 1980, it was revealed yesterday.

The average daily number of beds available to treat the mentally ill has dropped from 87,396 to the 1996-97 figure of 37,624. The figures were revealed in a written answer to Simon Hughes, Liberal Democrat MP for Southwark and Bermondsey, from Paul Boateng, health minister, with responsibility for mental health. The huge drop stems from the former government's policy of treating the mentally ill in the community, rather than in institutions.

— Jojo Moyes

SOCIETY

Grandparents sold short at Christmas

Grandparents get a rough deal when it comes to Christmas presents, according to figures published yesterday.

The average grandmother receives presents worth £20.66 from members of the family while granddad does even worse with an average of just £18.24. Compared to the average of £51 spent on other members of the family, older relatives are definitely doing the giving rather than the taking in the season of goodwill.

The survey, by Goldfish, the credit card company, showed that children under 12 were in for the best time at Christmas. On average, they receive £75 worth of presents from each of their parents.

CONTENTS

Arts news	5	Saturday story	21
Health news	7	Leader, letters	22
The law	9	Comment	23
Shopping	10	Obituaries	24
Mid-East	12	Business	25-27
Hunting debate	14, 15	Big picture	28
World news	16	Sport	Time Off, 16-28
Asylum	17	Crossword	Time Off, 14
Nazi gold	19	Weather	Time Off, 2
Arts	20	TV & Radio	The Eye

TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.38	Italy (lira)	2,822
Austria (schillings)	20.15	Japan (yen)	211.46
Belgium (francs)	59.19	Malta (lira)	0.63
Canada (\$)	2.32	Netherlands (guilders)	3.33
Cyprus (pounds)	0.83	Norway (kroner)	11.77
Denmark (kroner)	10.98	Portugal (escudos)	201.05
France (francs)	9.60	Spain (pesetas)	241.91
Germany (marks)	2.87	Sweden (kroner)	12.70
Greece (drachmas)	457.95	Switzerland (francs)	2.33
Hong Kong (\$)	12.56	Turkey (lira)	36,402
Ireland (pounds)	1.09	USA (\$)	1.63

Source: Thomson Guide
Rates for independent travellers only

ZITS



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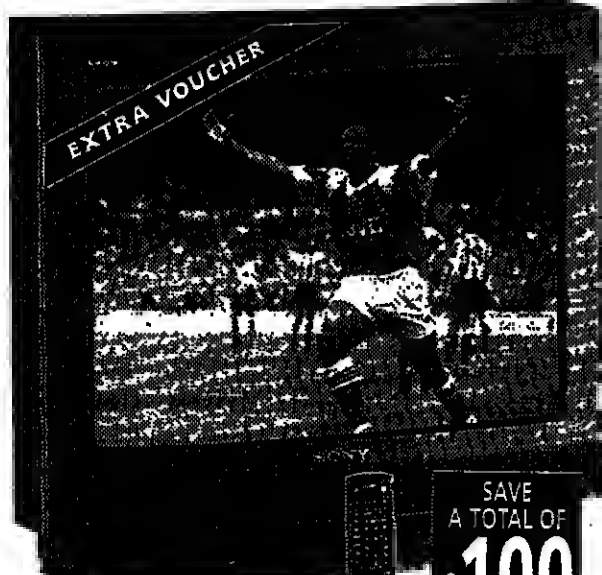


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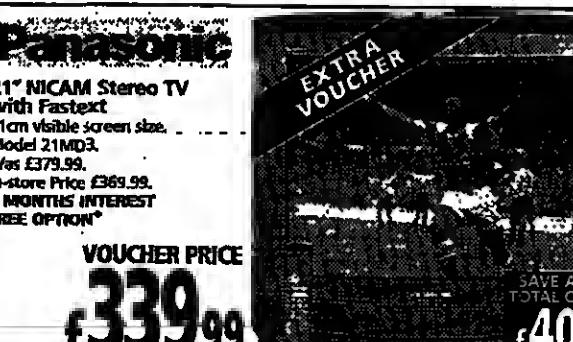
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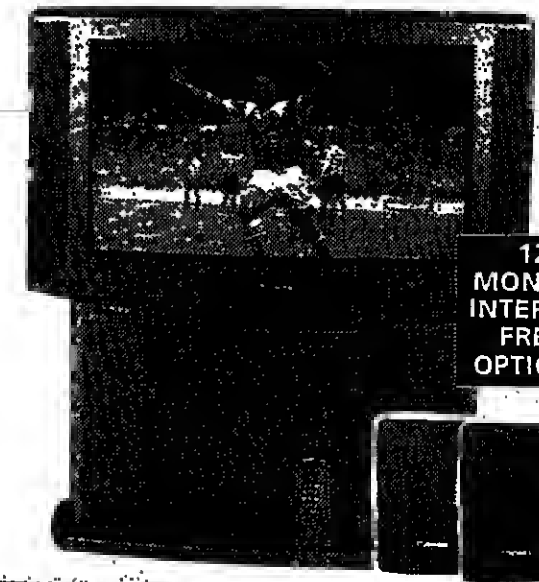
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5/ARTS NEWS

THE INDEPENDENT
SATURDAY 29 NOVEMBER 1997

National in clean sweep of awards

Former National Theatre director Sir Richard Eyre won two accolades and saw his company carry off the main prizes at yesterday's Evening Standard Drama Awards. David Lister, Arts News Editor, watched another moment of triumph for Sir Richard.

It was the biggest clean sweep in the 42-year history of the event.

Sir Richard Eyre was presented with a special award by actor Paul Scofield for the decade of his directorship, 1988-1997, and was also named best director for his productions of *King Lear* and *The Invention of Love* at an awards ceremony in which the National featured strongly.

Ian Holm was named best actor for his National Theatre *King Lear*, and Tom Stoppard collected the best play trophy for *The Invention of Love*.

Patrick Marber took the best comedy award for *Closer* - another NT production - and the award for best musical went to *Lady in the Dark* by Kurt Weill, Ira Gershwin and Moss Hart, which was staged at the National.

A highlight of the awards ceremony came when Dame Maggie Smith presented the best actress award Eileen Atkins for her performance in *A Delicate Balance* at the Haymarket Theatre, where she co-stars with Dame Maggie. Ridiculing a report that the two of them were out speaking, Dame Maggie recalled how they had known each other since their youth, and had de-

liberately sought a play to act in together. Such rumours were, she suggested, a hazard for actresses. "No one ever says, 'oh have you heard Othello's not getting on with fago,'" she observed.

While the awards ceremony had its usual upbeat atmosphere, much of the talk among the actors and actresses attending was about the current Equity strike in which many of them are involved. Union members are refusing to do voice overs and other commercials for television following a decision by the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising to reduce drastically repeat fees, cutting substantial earnings for many performers.

The award for most promising playwright went to Conor McPherson for *The Weir*, staged by the Royal Court.

Jonathan Harmsworth, 500 of Lord Rothermere, chairman of *The Daily Mail* and General Trust, publishers of the *Evening Standard*, introduced The Patricia Rothermere Award, created by Lord Rothermere in memory of his first wife.

It is a two-part award. The first part went to Dame Judi Dench in recognition of her services to theatre. The second, a scholarship allowing a drama student to take his or her place at drama school when they had no other funding, was won by 23-year-old Mark Rice-Oxley from Liverpool.

Ned Sherrin hosted the ceremony at The Savoy Hotel, central London.

Sir Richard Eyre's *King Lear* is to be filmed for BBC2's *Performance* programme. The three-week shoot, with Ian Holm as King Lear and most of the Royal National Theatre production cast unchanged, starts on Monday. It will be screened next year.

How a slice of Hollywood's feelgood factor helps cure the soul



Reel benefit: Bernie Wooster, a psychotherapist, says *The Wizard Of Oz* can help children: "It is a wonderful film because it shows that by being open and friendly to yourself and others, life can be happier" Photograph: London Features

The Wizard of Oz is therapeutic for children; Rebecca is prescribed for ailing marriages. Pretty Woman can help a girl with boyfriend problems. David Lister talks to Britain's first film therapist.

MGM, one of the world's biggest and best-known film studios, has asked a Hertfordshire therapist to endorse its classic children's film *The Wizard Of Oz*.

When the studio releases the film, digitally remastered on video this Christmas, it will come complete with a hill of health from the psychotherapist Bernie Wooster. MGM announced yesterday that Mr Wooster thinks *The Wizard Of Oz* "makes excellent viewing for responsible parents who are interested in the healthy emotional development of their children".

It is the first time a studio has commissioned a psychotherapist, Britain's only film therapist, to endorse a film.

The report Mr Wooster sent to MGM, entitled "The Wizard Of Oz: As Seen From A Therapeutic Perspective", breaks down the Judy Garland film scene by scene and concludes that the cast is bursting with role models for children.

In Mr Wooster's words, "The Wizard Of Oz is a wonderful film because it shows that by being open and friendly to yourself and others, life can be happier... They [the characters] are helpful role models for identifying those different parts of ourselves which are similar to these characters, ie woolly headed and unintelligent (Scarecrow), mechanical and going through the motions (Tin Man) and tense and frightened (Lion). It also portrays love and sharing in a joint quest."

At his clinic in Borehamwood near the old film studios at Elstree, Mr Wooster, 57, who

is registered with the UK Council of Therapists, described yesterday how his love of films and use of them in treating depression and other problems, had changed his patients' lives.

"This is not a gimmick," he said. "I'm sure everyone can think of a film that has moved them in some way. It's the sense of why and where it has moved you which is the springboard from where we start."

"For example, I was working with someone who wanted commitment from her boyfriend and couldn't get it, and she wasn't going to short-change herself. I got her to see the film *Pretty Woman* where Julia Roberts says: 'I want the full commitment. I want the fairy tale.' She saw it over and over again."

"Then there was a businessman who came to me quite depressed. He was a workaholic, but every time he achieved a project it lost its original promise. It dated from his parents pushing him when he was young. I told him to see *The Color Purple*, the scene where Whoopi Goldberg is acknowledged publicly for who she was, a human being. That kind of acknowledgment was what he needed. He went to see it eight times and was consoled with sobs. His energies were refocused. It changed his life."

Films that Mr Wooster particularly recommends for their therapeutic values include: *It's A Wonderful Life* with James Stewart, "brilliant for self-esteem"; *Rebecca*, "I recommend couples in second marriages who are having problems with one person feeling haunted by the shadow of a previous partner, to watch it together. It's a very good aid to communication".

Mr Wooster is now trying to persuade MGM to set up a "social concern division", devoted to putting out films that will help people. He said: "My mission is to get the whole perspective of viewing films and videos in a healing way."

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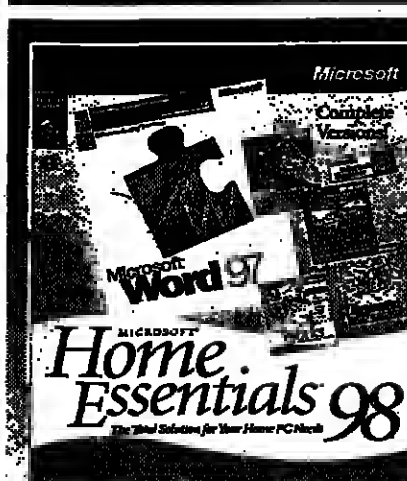
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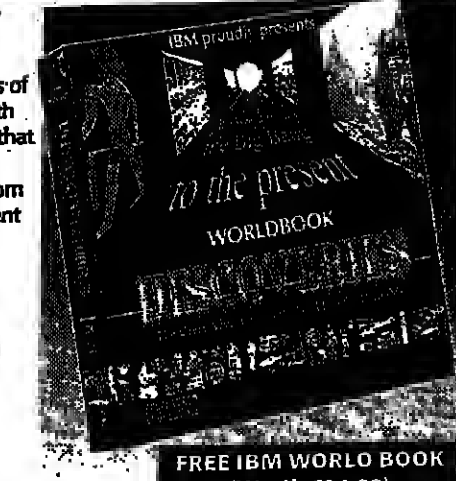
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7/HEALTH NEWS

THE INDEPENDENT
SATURDAY 29 NOVEMBER 1997

Doctors sceptical over £200 gadget to make baby brainy



Birth control: The development of BabyPlus reflects a national obsession with the health quick fix Photograph: Colorific

You strap it to your waist for the last 16 weeks of pregnancy and it gives you a brainier baby. Or so the manufacturers claim. *Jeremy Lawrence, Health Editor, looks at how ambitious mothers and their money are soon parted.*

It is a gadget like a Walkman and it plays knocking and whooshing sounds through your expanding abdomen which are said to stimulate your baby's mental development.

The sounds mimic the mother's heart beat and it is the subtle differences between these and the real thing that are believed to arouse the baby's curiosity and keep its brain cells developing.

But the BabyPlus, which is made in the US, does not come cheap. At £202.50 it would pay for a lot of nappies and reflects a national obsession with the health quick fix. Medical experts remain sceptical.

Sue Taylor, head of BabyPlus in the UK, said 6,000 had been sold over the past three years. "It kick starts the thinking process. I used it with my fourth child and the improvement in his attention span compared with the others is the most exciting thing."

Developed by US psychologist, Brent Logan, the theory is that by stimulating the baby's brain, the device causes more nerve connections to be laid down so that the brain cells do not die off at birth. Around



BabyPlus: The device plays sounds which mimic the mother's heartbeat

40 per cent of brain cells are said to perish because they fail to connect to other cells.

Babies born after use of the device are said to be more supple, more alert, with better muscle and head control. The gadget is especially popular in the Far East and a large research study is underway in India and Russia.

Ms Taylor said: "I wish it was much cheaper but that is just the way it works."

It was expensive to develop and there are just not enough mothers wearing it. There are also royalties to be paid to Dr Logan."

Dr Sarah Brewer, a GP who is writing a book on pre-natal stimulation, said most people were sceptical of its benefits until they saw the results. "My son's eyes were open when he was born and he had excellent head control. A lot of this is anecdotal and we are just at the stage where the evidence is coming in but there is enough for me to feel there is a benefit there. It is about trying to give your baby the best possible start in life."

Obstetricians say there is clear evidence that babies respond to stimulation in the womb and that, once born, a baby that is left unstimulated will not develop. There is no evidence, however, that playing sounds to the baby before birth in the womb is beneficial.

Dr John Friend, spokesman for the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists said: "Diet and environment - whether the mother drinks or smokes - are likely to be more important for the baby's development than this device. It is probably not worth the money."

Parents' anxiety about their offspring make them ready consumers of new ideas. A missionary in China trying to earn his fare home claimed to have invented a medicine that would produce a baby boy. The potion came with a money-back guarantee if it failed. The canny inventor only had to return half the money - and got rich.

Infection rate in NHS hospitals is 10 times that in private sector

Up to one in ten NHS patients now acquires an infection while in hospital. *Roger Dobson examines the possible causes.*

The pressure on beds in the wake of the National Health Service reforms may be one reason for a rise in the number of patients being infected in hospitals, according to specialists giving evidence to a House of Lords committee investigating the rise in resistance to antibiotics.

So-called hot-bedding, where the same bed could be occupied by different people in a 24-hour period, may be one of the main causes leading to an infection rate 10 times that in the private sector. Some specialists believe isolation wards are now needed for infected patients.

"There is a strong view now

that hot-bedding, the pressure on beds and the necessity for mixed-specialty wards, are very difficult circumstances in which to conduct infection control," said Professor Mark Casewell of King's College School of Medicine and Dentistry in London, who is one of Britain's foremost experts on hospital infection control.

Patients occupying hospital beds are also more likely to be sicker and thus more open to infection than they used to be because of the rise in day surgery, which means less-serious cases no longer need accommodation.

New guidelines on the control of methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), one of the most dangerous infections, are being finalised and are expected to warn that more money is needed to counter the problem. "It has proved impossible to eliminate one of these MRSA strains

from some of our hospitals," says Professor Casewell in his submission to the committee. He says this inability is "unique and unnerving".

An article in the *British Medical Journal* says the latest estimates are that 10 per cent of hospital patients will acquire an infection. The private health insurers Bupa says the infection rate in their hospitals, which have small wards and more side rooms, is less than 1 per cent.

In the report, consultant microbiologist Dr Keith Barker says there are a number of problems facing infection-control doctors: "The new NHS requires rapid turnover of patients and operates under considerable financial pressure. Patients are sicker and more vulnerable to hospital-acquired infection. They are sited into any bed and there are insufficient ... side rooms in which to isolate patients."

He adds: "Levels of basic cleanliness and the general fabric of clinical areas can be poor ... In essence, the new management of the NHS negates effective infection control."

An emerging threat is that several organisms are increasingly resistant to antibiotics and Professor Casewell, in his submission to the Lords' committee, says: "The requirement for isolation wards for MRSA, as well as other transmissible infections, has never been greater but senior management and health ministers have yet to be persuaded of the costs benefits of this investment."

He says the ultimate costs of not controlling MRSA will be a strong resistance to all antibiotics: "In Tokyo we already have a hint of this with an organism that is halfway up the scale to being resistant to the last drug we have in the armoury."

Machines win by a nose in taste game

Human tasters could soon be replaced by electronic ones, as the Agriculture Minister, Dr Jack Cunningham discovered yesterday. Scientists at the University of Nottingham are developing an electronic "taste bud", which will be used to develop food with more flavour by analysing the aromas that form in our noses when we eat meals.

Yesterday Dr Cunningham saw the machine as he opened the university's new £2.2m Food Science building. The "electronic taster" is being developed as part of a three-year project in which the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food is investing £120,000, half of the total funding.

The aim of the project is to build a machine that the food industry can use to develop new products. Whereas natural foods achieve their balance of taste, "mouth feel" and nutrition through their genes,

manufacturers of processed foods face a constant struggle when trying to develop "low fat" or "low calorie" products by mechanical means. This is because taking out fat generally means taking out "taste": fats absorb and hold the complex aromatic compounds that we perceive as taste, and contribute strongly to the sensation that professional tasters describe as "mouth feel" once we start chewing something.

But the trouble with tasters is that their sense of taste varies from day to day. An electronic "nose" that can precisely evaluate the aromas in different chewed-up foods, and especially in experimental ones, would be a valuable addition to the present testing regime that new food products undergo, though humans would still be essential in the final stage before a food reached the shops.

Charles Arthur, Science Editor

Social class has a powerful influence on whether people grow up healthy or are beset by illness, a study over 33 years has confirmed.

A follow up of 11,407 people born in England, Scotland and Wales in 1958 revealed strong links between social origin and a broad spectrum of health risk factors. These included birthweight and height, household overcrowding, smoking and diet, breastfeeding, divorce, educational achievement and unemployment.

With only a few exceptions there were "strong significant trends" of increasing adverse risk associated with lower social classes.

The researchers, Dr Chris Power and Sharon Matthews of the Institute of Child Health, London, gathered information from participants in the study from birth up to the age of 33. They also obtained data from

parents, teachers and doctors. Writing in *The Lancet* they concluded: "An individual's chance of encountering multiple adverse health risks throughout life is influenced powerfully by social position."

"Social trends in adult-disease risk factors do not emerge exclusively in mid-life but accumulate over decades."

The trend towards greater risk with lower social class was especially strong for general sickness, respiratory symptoms and psychological distress in both men and women.

Key factors included maternal and passive smoking, own smoking habits, and low consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables. For each of these risk increased from the highest to the lowest class of origin.

The authors suggested that pre-school care and education could play an important role in tackling the problem.

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Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

"The nation's lawmakers need to wake up," he said. "It's still illegal to beat your wife after 9pm because of the noise or to make love on the steps of a church after sundown. I suppose it's allowed in broad daylight, is it?"

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Ecstatic punters lap up the business of sex

It was drizzling yesterday outside the Erotica exhibit at Olympia but it was hard to find even one man wearing a raincoat. Purple boas and codpieces, yes. Leather, yes, lots of it and a bit of silver lame too. But very few raincoats indeed. "Inevitably we will get a few sleazeballs but most of the dirty raincoats will stay at home," said Erotica organiser Brian Wiseman. "That type of man is easily frightened."

BY ANN
TRENEMAN

Brian was wearing a black suit and a grey shirt with a pin on his lapel that says "Head Boy". This exhibit - the first of its kind in Britain - was his idea. "This is erotic, this is not sex," he insists as women prance around the catwalk. "It is not sleazy because I'm not a sleazy person." So no nudity then? "Just tops. No naked genitals."

I spot them later, swigging from a bottle of M&M, and wonder how they'll be by the time the raffle is drawn at 10pm. They might like the first prize, which is a huge hamper of sex toys including a 13 inch dildo and something called a ripple-super-sucker. "It's worth £250 in all," said the raffle man proudly.

Six thousand people had booked tickets for yesterday's exhibit which runs until Sunday, and a further 2,000 were expected yesterday at the door. Most visitors said they had made the trip for curiosity's sake and there was much to be curious about among the 84 stalls that range from the hard-core to hot tubs to the Terrence Higgins Trust. There was also a continuous live show (with both show girls and boys), an art exhibit and an Internet city.

Not to mention the Fetish Fair. Here I find the passion bed, complete with leather pillows, fur sheets and a web-like thing hanging over it. "That is



Too sexy for my shirt: Models and punters watching the catwalk 'bridal' show at Olympia where both girls and boys strut non-stop.
Photograph: David Ross

a tantric love swing," says the diminutive Kim Brown of Ero-leak who made the bed from salvaged wood. He lifts up part of the headboard. "See,

stocks that work. They are completely disguised." He says the love swing has been tested up to 16 stone. "I'm looking for volunteers now. Interested?"

The woman at the dildo stall is not surprised at the lack of passion so far. No one has bought one of her wares yet either, despite an eye-catching

display of a life-size John Wayne cut-out complete with bristled dildo. "Western theme," she explains and adds sotto voce, "In our experience

people buy after they've had a few drinks." The message yesterday was that sex is out of the closet to stay. David Woodhouse, 30,

and Paul Stephens, 28, are neighbours and fishing buddies from St Austell. They have come up for the day to check out the scene and claim that their wives and even David's mother know their whereabouts. "We are users of pornography and so is my wife to a lesser degree. It's been tucked under the carpet for long," said David. Paul nodded and said: "I mean it is only recently that I even found out that there was a fetish club in Cornwall."

By now the catwalk show is in full swing with a bride traipsing around in white suspenders. A Page 3 model squeezes by. I spot a few from the raincoat brigade before heading outside. There I overhear a woman on her mobile. "Let me just say it's an eye-opener. Dog collars, dolls, whips. I can't really speak," she says, looking at me. "but it is a real eye opener. You'll enjoy it." And then she tucks her phone away, tightens the belt on her raincoat and walks away.

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Elton's togs draw the cash despite the buttoned purses

'No Shop Day' was perhaps not the most auspicious day for Elton John to sell his clothes. But those at the sale should not feel too bad. At least the clothes were being recycled, Clare Garner points out.

They were not supposed to be getting out their cheque books at all yesterday, but bargain hunters at the Elton John sale in a temporary shop in Piccadilly, London, could not resist a Versace shirt for £25 or a designer tie for just £15.

The notion of a "No Shop Day", which was invented by green organisations to remind us of the excesses of our consumer culture, probably means nothing to Elton. As Robert Key, who organised the singer's sale and has worked with him

for years, said: "He is a great shopper. Elton will go into a store and ask for a particular shirt and then buy it in six different colours."

Indeed, it took him just three years to accumulate yesterday's collection of 10,000 items. The originals cost a total of £2.5m, but secondhand they were going for 10 per cent of their value now. Thus the £6,000 Versace leather suit worn by Elton at the designer's funeral earlier this year was a snip at £600. The £250,000 raised was to go to the Elton John AIDS Foundation.

Mike Childs, a senior campaigner at the environmental group Friends of the Earth, which organised events for No Shop Day, was surprisingly easy on Elton. "At least Elton is flogging off his clothes for charity and those people buying them are buying secondhand clothes, which is not a bad thing," he said.

In contrast to Elton's sale, an

installation art piece in south London is offering customers a chance to prove their anti-consumerist credentials. No Shop is part of Friends of the Earth's Fair Share campaign, which focuses on the need to reduce material consumption and pollution to defined ecological limits, and questions whether increasing consumerism can deliver a better quality of life. It "promises everything but sells nothing".

The window of No Shop is full of goods and special offers, but the space inside simply contained images of empty shelves and a single "No Sales Assistant" behind an image of a cash register. Visitors are given a receipt thanking them for "not shopping at No Shop".

No Shop, 131 Lower Marsh, London SE1, is open to the public today, Monday and Tuesday. Other activities will take place in shopping centres today, International No Shop Day.

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Murder case RAF man was impotent

A senior RAF officer accused of murdering his wife over an infatuation yesterday told a court that he had been impotent after returning from the Gulf in 1991.

RAF Regiment Squadron Leader Nicholas Tucker, 46, who is based at RAF Honington, Suffolk, told a jury at Norwich Crown Court that he had had sex "infrequently" between 1991 and 1995 because of the problem.

Tucker denies murdering his wife Carol, 52, at Lackford, Suffolk, on 21 July 1995. Prosecutors say he was infatuated with Dijana Dudukovic - a Serbian interpreter he had met while serving in the former Yugoslavia in the first half of 1995.

Yesterday, Tucker who served as a nuclear, biological and chemical weapons expert during the Gulf conflict in 1990, said his attempts to have sex

with Dudukovic had been "a bit of a disaster".

Yesterday he faced questioning from David Stokes QC, prosecuting. He told Mr Stokes that although he had known Miss Dudukovic since January 1991, their relationship had been nothing special. He said it had only become sexual when he took Miss Dudukovic back to London for a week about a month before his wife's death.

Mr Stokes asked Tucker about a visit he had made to a venereal disease clinic shortly after he returned home on 15 July 1995.

The doctor he saw told the court how Tucker explained that he had last had sex with his Serbian girlfriend two weeks before and had not had sex before that for two years.

Under cross-examination Tucker said his last sexual contact with Miss Dudukovic had been about three weeks before his visit to the clinic.

And he said he had not had sex before that for a longer period than the two years noted by the doctor.

"It is actually more than that [two years]," said Tucker. "When I came back from the Gulf I was impotent. In fact, it had been longer than that."

"Sex had been infrequent since early 1991," Tucker told the court that he had not expected to see Miss Dudukovic again after leaving Bosnia in mid-July.

But the court heard that he had contacted her by phone two days after returning to England, on the morning of the day his wife died, and again on the day after his wife died.

He had continued to contact her by phone for many months after that, the court had heard. The case continues.



Seeing the funny side: Tory party leader William Hague's speech gets the audience laughing at the National Conservative Women's annual conference in the Queen Elizabeth II centre at Westminster yesterday. Photograph: Rui Xavier

Guerin suspect jailed for 20 years

A man identified by an arresting garda officer as the killer of crime journalist Veronica Guerin was yesterday jailed for 20 years on drugs trafficking charges.

Patrick "Dutchy" Eugene Holland, 58, also known as "the Wig," with an address at Brittas Bay, Co Wicklow, was cited by Garda Marion Cusack as the person suspected of shooting the reporter in June 1996 when she arrested him at Dun Laoghaire last April.

The trial was held in the non-jury Special Criminal Court, which hears terrorist and criminal cases where jurors could be at risk. Evidence was heard from Charles Bowden, the first person to testify before an Irish court under the new witness protection programme.

Bowden, 33, a former soldier now serving a sentence for drugs offences, ran a cannabis distribution operation on behalf of others who the court ordered should not be named. He said he regularly supplied Holland with 20 to 50 kilos of cannabis

during 1995 and 1996. He also confirmed that he prepared and primed the .357 Magnum revolver, imported with a cannabis consignment in early 1996, which was used to kill Ms Guerin, but had not known the intention was to kill her.

Mr Justice Johnson said it would be dangerous to convict on the evidence of Bowden alone, an accomplice, but cited corroborating evidence from gardai that Holland had said in custody "Look lads, I have my own customers and I am not going to implicate them".

The court heard Holland's nickname was on lists found at a Dublin lock-up garage used in preparing cannabis supplies where 47kg of the drug were found. Holland denied ever receiving cannabis and rejects Bowden's and garda evidence. Holland has convictions dating from 1965 for offences including armed robbery and possession of explosives.

The court refused leave to appeal to the Supreme Court. — Alan Murdoch

Beckett defends 'blind trust'

Margaret Beckett last night said she would keep a "blind trust" unless Sir Patrick Neill, the watchdog on standards, rules against the practice in his review on party funding.

The President of the Board of Trade defended the blind trust, which helps fund her constituency office, and rejected a call by her Conservative shadow, John Redwood, to follow the example of Cabinet colleagues, including the Prime Minister, to wind it up. Mr Redwood also called on Mrs Beckett to publish the names of her donors to the trust.

Mrs Beckett said on BBC radio: "I use it to employ a member of staff, so if I had to give it up it would be a source of great regret to me because she is a very good and hard-working member of staff."

● Mrs Beckett, a keeo caravaner, earlier opened the Caravan and Outdoor Leisure Show at Earl's Court in London and said critics should praise the industry's major contribution to the economy.

"Caravan manufacture is a British success story - 95 per cent of all caravans sold in the UK are British-made," she said.

Bribes inquiry at Sandhurst

The Ministry of Defence has launched an investigation into allegations that Army instructors at Sandhurst Royal Military College in Berkshire took "huge bribes" from overseas cadets in return for better grades.

Non-commissioned officers at Britain's leading military academy are said to have accepted BMW and Mercedes cars, Rolex watches and foreign holidays. An MoD spokesman confirmed that the Royal Military Police were investigating a "number of allegations raised by some overseas officer cadets". "The issue is in connection with the acceptance of gifts in contravention of Queen's regulations for the Army," he said.

The men are believed to have been taken temporarily into custody before being allowed to go back to work while the investigation takes place.

About 10 per cent of the 600 cadets attending Sandhurst each year are from overseas. In previous years some have given instructors presents after the passing-out parade. But it is alleged that some have made gifts before the parade in the hope of having their grades boosted. — Ian Burrell

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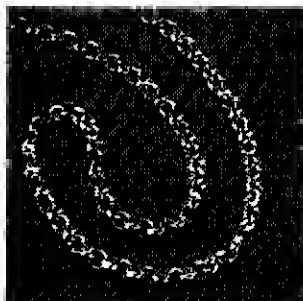
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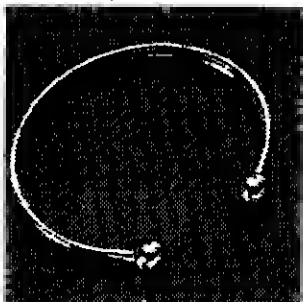
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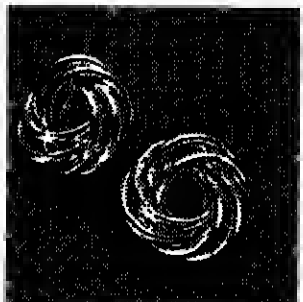
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Netanyahu: Why the US can't stand him

The rift between the US and Israel is deepening in the wake of the crisis in Iraq. President Clinton blames the Israeli Prime Minister for undermining US influence by reneging on the previous Israeli government's deal with the Palestinians. Patrick Cockburn, in Jerusalem, explains why the two allies are at odds and why it matters.

At one moment their planes were within 200 yards of each other at Los Angeles airport but they never met. Bill Clinton is putting real effort into not meeting Benjamin Netanyahu in order to undermine his displeasure at the actions of the Israeli Prime Minister. Instead of the American President, Mr Netanyahu had to make do with a talk with Arnold Schwarzenegger, for whom he expressed deep admiration.

These snubs, more blatant by the week, do not go unnoticed by Mr Netanyahu. "Don't you know, there is a Saddam Hussein of the East," he complained privately, speaking of President Clinton's attitude towards him. "And there is me, the Saddam Hussein of the West." In a fit of pique he told his office to stop trying to arrange a meeting with the President.

Irritation in Washington at Mr Netanyahu's deep-freezing of agreements with the Palestinians has been mounting for months. But it is the renewed Iraq crisis, the most serious challenge to the US in the Middle East since the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, which has convinced Washington in the last few weeks that Israel's defiance is costing it dearly in the Arab world.

The Gulf War left America the predominant power in the region. But when Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, toured the region drumming up support for action against Saddam Hussein this



Face off: Bill Clinton is strenuously avoiding any contact with the Israeli leader, Benjamin Netanyahu, in a bid to force the 'Saddam of the West' to make peace with the Palestinians

leader has shown surprising flexibility. By allowing UN inspectors looking for his non-conventional weapons to return and to enter his palaces he is denying the US a cause around which to rally support.

Mr Netanyahu may think it is unfair for the US to blame him for its difficulties in winning Arab support against Iraq. But he cannot be surprised that President Clinton does not like him. The American leader made strenuous efforts to keep him out of power in Israel in 1996. Immediately after the bus bombings in Jerusalem last year, Mr Clinton organised a conference of world leaders at Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt in support of Shimon Peres, the Israeli prime minister who went on to lose the general election.

Mr Netanyahu presumably thinks that, eventually, he can face down the White House. Between one-quarter and a half of the Democratic Party's campaign funds are estimated to come from the American Jewish community. Aid for Israel was held up twice this year - an unheard of action by Congress - but this was opposed by powerful politicians such as Newt Gingrich, the Speaker of the House, some of whose largest donors are Jewish right-wingers.

But Israel's Prime Minister may have miscalculated. In the present crisis, Israel is a strategic liability for the US as it tries to retain its hold over the Middle East.

If Washington truly begins to think of Mr Netanyahu as the 'Saddam Hussein of the West', then Israel, for the first time, may come under intense pressure from the US to reach an agreement with the Palestinians.

month she encountered an embarrassing silence. The Doha economic conference in Qatar, originally billed as an important summit between Israel and its Arab neighbours, was a flop. Even Kuwait, which only exists now because of the Gulf War, refused to endorse American military action against President Saddam.

Mr Netanyahu blithely says Mr Clinton is being 'naïve' in holding him responsible for eroding America's alliance with the conservative Arab states.

In words expressed privately, but likely to increase Amer-

ican anger, the Israeli Prime Minister added: "Once the first American tank crosses into Iraq, the Arabs will all join in."

Nobody, apart from Mr Netanyahu (and perhaps even him), thinks this is true. At the same moment as Mrs Albright was failing to win support for the US in the Gulf, Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi deputy prime minister, was having a more successful tour, culminating in a visit to Damascus, the first time an Iraqi leader has visited Syria's capital in 17 years.

Is the American grip on the

Middle East faltering? The policy of so-called "dual-containment" of Iraq and Iran is looking very ragged. After mediating an agreement which led to a return of the US inspectors to Baghdad last week, Russia is once more a power in the region, for the first time since 1990.

But the change can be exaggerated. Moscow wants as much influence as it can get in the Middle East, but not at the price of a confrontation with the US.

Boris Yeltsin's need for American political and financial

support is too great. Even Iraq, in its own way, wants an understanding with the US, with whom it was allied during its war against Iran from 1980 to 1988.

It may be that both the US and Israel are surprised by the course of the latest Gulf crisis because, for once, President Saddam has not over-played his hand. "We're just waiting for him to do something stupid so we can whack him," a senior Pentagon official was quoted as saying a fortnight ago. He may do so, but so far, unlike the Gulf crisis in 1990-91, the Iraqi

Iraq opens palace doors to the West

Iraqi newspapers yesterday said Baghdad hoped a decision to allow foreign experts to check Saddam Hussein's presidential palaces for banned weapons would defuse its stand-off with Washington.

Washington insists that UN inspectors charged with ridding Iraq of weapons of mass destruction must enjoy unfettered access to sites, while Baghdad says some areas are off limits to the UN Special Commission (Unsc), though other foreign experts will be allowed to visit them.

"Iraq wants to avert an explosion of the situation in the region as a result of America's aggressive escalation," Iraq's ruling Baath party newspaper *al-Thawra* said.

Iraqi media said Tariq Aziz, the deputy prime minister, had sent the UN an invitation for some 117 foreign experts to visit the palaces and presidential buildings to see if they contain any prohibited weapons. The invitations were extended to UN Security Council member states.

Al-Thawra urged them "to react positively". But the paper said it expected the US would

try to "prevent the Special Commission and the Security Council from agreeing to the Iraq initiative."

Iraq's Foreign Minister, Mohammed Saeed al-Sahaf, on Thursday ruled out allowing the current Unsc weapons inspectors in Baghdad to visit the palaces. "No one will be permitted to go there," he said.

Eight teams of UN arms monitors headed for Iraqi sites yesterday for the seventh consecutive day after Baghdad's decision to allow UN inspection teams, including Americans, to resume their work. The official Iraqi news agency INA said that among them was a team of nuclear weapons specialists. The agency quoted a source criticising the teams for doing inspections on Friday, which was a Muslim holiday.

Access to presidential palaces and other sensitive sites has been the main sticking point since the weapons inspections resumed last week.

The weapons inspectors have to give Iraq a clean bill of health before UN sanctions imposed after the 1990 invasion of Kuwait can be lifted.

— Reuters, Baghdad

Bomb author jailed

A Jewish extremist who wrote a book in praise of Baruch Goldstein, the Hebron mosque massacre gunman, has been jailed for eight months. A Jerusalem magistrate said the book, *Baruch, the Hero* was an incitement to racism.

Michael Ben Horin, the author, was sentenced to eight months for supporting a terrorist organisation, while two men who helped him to write it were fined and given suspended sentences.

Judge Yaakov Tzaban said the three were no different from the Muslim extremists who praise Islamic militant suicide bombers, the *Yediot Ahronot* daily said. "The book

turns an act of terror into an act of bravery, and the perpetrator of this act into a hero... a society wanting to prevent terrorism cannot allow such a publication," Judge Tzaban said.

In February 1994, the Brooklyn-born Goldstein turned an automatic rifle on Muslim worshippers kneeling in prayer in the Tomb of the Patriarchs in the West Bank town of Hebron. He killed 29 Palestinians before being beaten to death. The most militant among Jewish settlers have praised Goldstein as a hero, and his grave has become a site of pilgrimage.

— AP Jerusalem

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13/GERMAN STUDENTS

THE INDEPENDENT
SATURDAY 29 NOVEMBER

Europe's new militants: marching for the soft life

Germany's streets are filling again with marching students. But Imre Karacs in Bonn says that, unlike their forebears in 1968, today's protesters lack lofty goals. They are striking to preserve their privileges.

ed the universities for too long." The students hoped this would be remedied in the usual German manner, with the government throwing a little more money in their direction. No such luck. Instead of building lecture theatres and hiring more professors, the authorities are proposing to tinker with only the demand side of the economic equation.

There is talk, or at least whispers, of tuition fees. Plans are afoot to empower universities to weed out entrants and evict laggards prematurely: maybe only five years after the start of their course. And there is even the shocking suggestion that universities should adopt British-style bachelor's degrees, to shorten the time the youth of today spend dreaming among the spires or amid heaps of red brick. On average, German students spend 10 years of their lives at university. They hit the job market just as they encounter the first worrying signs of middle-age spread.

The most powerful wave of student protests to hit Germany for 20 years is spreading. Tens of thousands have demonstrated this week in Berlin, Frankfurt and almost every university town. On Thursday 40,000 rallied in Bonn to vent their fury at the federal government. The strikes, occupations and disruptions are to continue next week, when students will mass on regional capitals.

"They have endured cuts for a decade but now enough is enough. A government plan to reform university funding, and tentative hints of a fundamental overhaul of higher education, have opened the floodgates. The problem is similar to that in Britain, only more extreme. In the past 20 years the intake of universities has doubled, while funds to pay for the 1.8 million students have shrunk. Standards have been eroding to such an extent that the decline is seen as a threat to Germany's competitiveness."

"The students have legitimate reasons to protest," said Jürgen Rüttgers, the Education Minister.

"They are lacking books, lecture halls are overcrowded, and there are too many students waiting ... to talk to their professors ... Society has neglect-

Many stay longer, marrying, and taking advantage of perks that include cheap public transport and canteen food, reductions for cinemas, museums and other entertainment and subsidised crèches. Who pays? - 90 per cent of the tab is picked up by regional governments, the rest by Bonn. Grants to cover living costs are scarce. Parents must pay for students' upkeep and the students themselves must make up the shortfall by doing holiday jobs.

Everybody agrees the system is far from perfect. For most university courses, there is one requirement: applicants must pass the *Abitur* at the end of their secondary schooling. Over the years, it has got easier, and so the campuses have filled up. Administrators in Bonn hire cin-



Shot down: Students protesting about the money spent on Eurofighter, demanding that some should go on education. Photograph: Reuters

ministrators in Bonn hire cinemas hooked up to their lecture halls for over-subscribed lectures. At many biology classes, 12 students get to carve up one rat among them. Christoph Pieper, a 23-year-old student of German and Latin, knows of only one way to create order in this chaos. "We are striking for a better financing of higher education," he said as he hung a banner across the archway of Bonn university's Great Hall.

"There is plenty of money around. The Bundestag has just approved DM23bn for Eurofighter. The universities would need only about two to three billion of that. I admit it is not an entirely satisfactory solution, but it's a beginning."

Mr Pieper is no rahble-rouser, merely a closet con-

servative dissatisfied with the conservative government's reforming zeal. Asked if he wanted to change the world, he was indignant: "No way. This society cannot be changed."

But some students are prepared to consider the possibility that certain things cannot go on. Michael Shohat, a 23-year-old psychology student, is against the strike, but not because he has any sympathy for the government.

"I understand if we strike about lack of money and resources—that's OK, because the system is really collapsing. What I don't understand is how people expect to pay nothing and yet expect higher standards. There is simply not enough money in this country for that."

UK provide best lessor

By German standards, Arnd H 27, is precocious. He did his first degree long ago and is about to his PhD thesis. Not surprising one considers where he studied. His parents sent him her 15 to learn English and he stay

He remained for a year to please parents and enrolled for sixth for that there was really no chance wanted to do biochemistry. In many, very few universities offer course ... In Britain, every standard university does it."

After three years at Imperial College he had his first degree, two ahead of the brainiest of his G contemporaries. An increasing number of Germans are fleeing to escape crowded, irrelevant courses and herent professors at home: an estimated 10,000 study at British universities and 8,000 in the US and the number of foreigners attracted by G universities is falling.

"Anyone who can afford to send their children to university abroad," said Guido Westerwelle, secretary of the Free Democratic Party, "The rest are stuck with ... lower quality and far longer terms studying. Hosters are satisfied with the their money bought in London was recently joined by his brother is studying medicine at

— Imre Karacs

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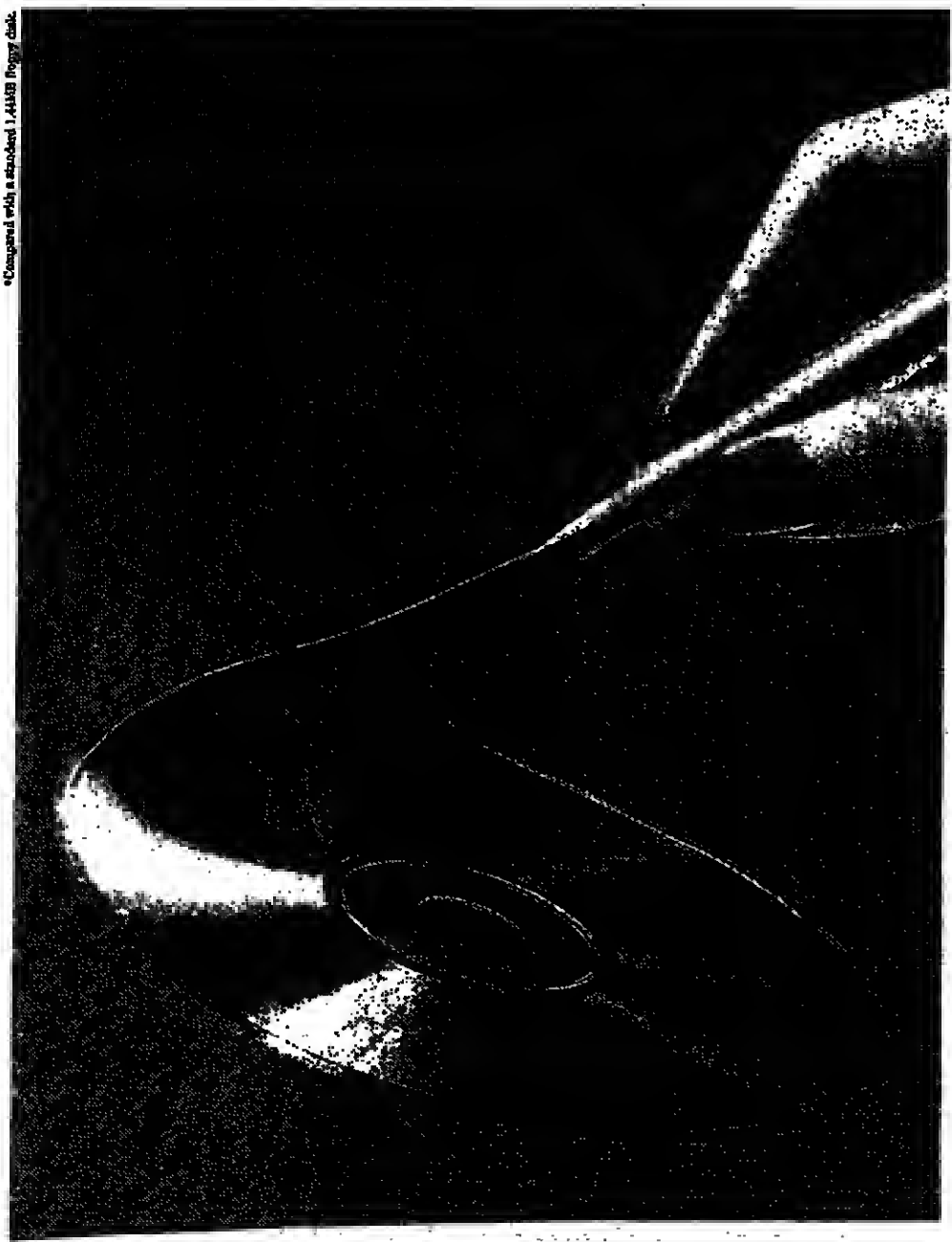
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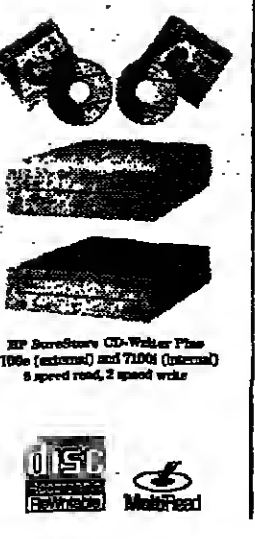
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14/INDOOR

crafty ways with silk

furnishings to clothes and wall hangings, silk painting is extremely versatile. Sally Staples joins a course to how.

are 10 of us sitting around a large farm-kitchen table tucked into a selection of niche, salads, fruit and home-made cake sitting away like old friends. The scenario that you might expect in a conventional education class. Although the pupils—all on this particular course—have signed learn silk painting, they also have the to relax and make friends in homely surroundings set deep in the Wye valley. We are residential, using all the facilities.



the converted old Edwardian coach as though it were home. Others, who call, join the art centre's five-day for just a day or two. Anyone, says tutor sh, can enjoy learning the techniques painting. There is no need to be talented. There is no pressure to and there are plenty of laughs. Myself from Alcester has drawn a design on a silk tie for her son's Christmas. His name she admits coyly is Will. Will somehow it is hard to imagine the novelist wearing a silk tie designed

by Mummy. Hilary is used to the open-mouthed reaction when she reveals her son's identity. Then after just the right pause she laughs and admits her Will is not the Will. But she confesses they do have plenty of fun with other people's confusion.

She has set up her tie on a frame and is outlining the design with a "gutta" which is similar to the masking fluid used in watercolour. Because Will has just moved house, she has designed the tie with dozens of tiny houses becoming progressively smaller as the tie narrows. Once the outlining is complete, she can colour them with water-based paint and once dry they are fixed by ironing.

Care worker Rachel Perryman, aged 25, who is between jobs, is working faster than any of the others and she has chosen to tackle a

large rectangular piece of silk which she will turn into a scarf, or possibly a wall hanging. The silk is stretched across a frame to keep it in place and Rachel has outlined a selection of leaves entertained with flowers and butterflies. Now she is having fun with a selection of rich colours, mixing greens and blues and reds and progressing at great speed.

"I did art A-level and my mother has done a bit of silk

painting so I thought I'd have a go. The course is brilliant and Liz gives us some useful tips to create special effects."

One of these is to dampen the silk, paint it with your chosen colours and then sprinkle salt over the pattern while still wet. When the paint has dried the salt can be shaken off and leaves behind a mottled effect.

Brenda Clough, from North Somerset, has chosen to paint an autumn scene on her piece of silk, and the skill with which she produces slender leaves and swirling vines indicates that she is not a beginner. Brenda has worked with

watercolours before and admits this helps with silk painting.

Also on the course is a granddaughter and granny team who have never tried silk painting before. Nine Stanford, 23, a website designer who lives locally, persuaded her granny Dorothy to visit the arts centre and try one of the courses. Dorothy, on holiday from Cheshire, is delighted with what she has achieved in such a short time.

She bought some padded silk spectacle cases from tutor Liz and has painted them with floral scenes. "I'm not much of an artist but I copied some pictures of flowers and I don't think they've come out too badly," she said. Nina has painted a variety of design on silk bowties as Christmas presents and is now working on a large scarf decorated with flowers and leaves. She has cut out the flower shapes, pinned them to the silk and then outlined them with the gutta before choosing what colours to paint them.

Liz emphasises to her students that any mistakes made on the silk are not reasons to panic. "Use your mistakes," she charges her pupils. "You can often turn them into something quite interesting. I use water-based solvent free paints and I bring a selection on the course so that students can buy what they need if they are beginners. There is so much on the market that it does help to get some guidance on the products."

Meanwhile, the informality of the Wye Valley Arts Centre makes it very popular. Director Valerie Welham tells the story of one young student who felt so at home that, feeling a little peckish, he popped down to the kitchen in the early hours of the morning and devoured half the chicken casserole that had been made for the following day's lunch.

A five-day silk-painting course for residential students at the Wye Valley Arts Centre costs £280 which includes full board and tuition fees. For further information on this and other courses contact Valerie Welham at The Old Coach House, Mork, St Bravel's, Lydney, Gloucestershire GL15 6QH (01291 689463 or 01595 530214; website: www.wyvalleyartscentre.com or e-mail: wyseart@mcmail.com). Liz Nash can offer further advice on silk painting (01794 301217) and also teaches evening classes at Romsey School, Greatbridge, Romsey, Hants (01794 522106).



Special effects: Liz Nash's silk-painting course is creative, fun and sociable Photographs: Christopher Jones

AMES

WYN O'BEIRNE RANELAGH N'T JUNK IT - USE IT

ask, we are going to do some origami to make it easier, we shall not be using those tiresome diagrams that super-folding so cumbersome. With a square of paper with sides of 10 in long. Now, to make the folds easier to follow, mark the sides A, B, C and D (in that order), the sides of the sides E, F, G and H (with E and A, B, F between B and C and the centre O. (Find the centre by folding in half and unfolding, first side to side then top to bottom.) Copy the letters he back, in case you lose them. Now fold B and D to meet in the centre. O, crease the line AO backwards. Now comes the difficult bit: bring A and C, folding on the crease that you just made to bring H, E and F together. You should now have a flat

square shape, with a triangle on top. 4. Turn your attention to the corner where A and C meet, and fold the small triangular portion (including the A corner) up inside the pocket above it. A should now be tucked up with B, D and O. 5. Fold up C into the same pocket to lock the previous flap in place. You are now left with a triangular pocket, with a smaller triangle surrounding it. 6. Fold the top triangle not quite all the way into the top pocket, leaving it sticking out by a few millimetres. 7. Turn the paper over, and that's it. Oh, you want to know what it is, do you? Well I'll tell you. What you have made is a neat little bookmark with a tab. Carry it with you at all times, slip it over the corner of the page when you stop reading, and dog-eared books will be a thing of the past.

CLUEDO WILLIAM HARTSTON

It was the chap with the silly name, in the hotel near Windsor, with the 8ft piece of lead piping. Or it might have been the PR chap from Waddingtons, with the mobile phone, in the bar. Today, at the Oakley Court Hotel near Windsor, Britain's first official Cluedo Convention is taking place to raise money for the charity Children With Leukemia. They began yesterday, with playlets, unusual identification parades and odd challenges as well as normal Cluedo games, all to determine who wins the first prize of a murder mystery trip on the Venice Simplon Orient Express. Cluedo, for anyone who does not know it, is a board game of logical deduction. It starts with a man, Dr Black,

having been murdered. Cards indicate who killed him, in what room, and with which weapon, are hidden in an envelope. The other cards are distributed among the players who may gain information by asking questions of each other in turn, while moving their pieces, according to dice throws, round a flat-plan of the mansion in which the murder took place. Invented by Anthony Pratt, a Leeds solicitor's clerk, in 1946, Cluedo has now sold well over 100 million sets around the world. It has also inspired a film and a television series. The present event, however, is the first to offer bonus points to any entrant who shares a name with any of the Cluedo characters. My money's on Colonel Mustard.

PANDORA MELLY GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

James Dyson, 50, inventor and manufacturer of the Dyson bagless vacuum cleaner

I play Monopoly, but without much enjoyment. It's a bit tedious going round the board and acquiring things. More fun when everybody's going bankrupt and you start borrowing money or negotiating properties with people in lieu of rent. When you're doing something with another person, it stops being a matter of luck. I'd like to get straight into that, and forgo throwing the dice and moving round the board. I think Monopoly is a game you play in your late teens and early twenties, and it always mirrors later life in some way. There are people who haven't looked at the long term. They accumulate, then run out of cash because they haven't bought any buildings, and they land on people who've mortgaged themselves to the hilt to build hotels. Some people like trains and always buy the stations, but they're just being romantic,

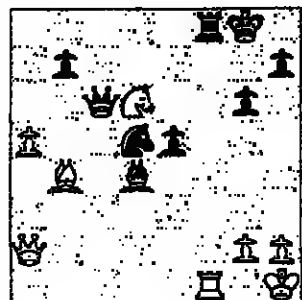
because it's an hotel on the red or yellow squares which will crucify the other players. I've always thought it's a mistake to buy Mayfair and Park Lane because they're frightfully expensive and you've only got two to land on. Whereas if you've blocked off a corner with the red and orange sets, people will land on you every single time. That's the fun of it for me: getting the strategy right and thinking for the long term. I've always done that, and I'll mortgage myself to the hilt in order to get something valuable. The stations will get you a little money in the short term, but the winners are always the people with the swanky hotels. In a way, I dread playing. I have to make investments and negotiate with people in my everyday life. In the evenings, the last thing I want is a kind of repetition with Monopoly. Loose Monopoly money may be swept up with a Dyson bagless vacuum cleaner. Read all about it, and its inventor, in James Dyson's 'Against the Odds' (Orion Books, £18.99).

WSS: WILLIAM HARTSTON

in you tell a human from a computer? Alan Turing proposed a "Turing Test" for intelligence his test was clearly on too d a plane to encompass a of people cheating in simultaneous display. dea was to have a neoter asking questions respondents, one, one machine. If the ter can be programmed its responses cannot be fished from the 's, then, by Turing's, one has to admit that chine is intelligent. hat if the experimenter world chess champion, questions take the f moves played in a f chess games? It is 'cult to devise a set of ns that will discriminate n computers and s, but if the champion's, objective is to win the then discrimination s more difficult. hat was it that made casparov think that a mpeting against him e Internet in a neous display a couple s ago was using a er to help select its 'Black's excellent g play - and the e of a computer beside d (necessary for the t connection) - may en enough to alert ow's suspicions. The ss with which they then

threaded their way through complex tactics seemed to confirm it. Finally, 29... Rf8! was too much for him. After 30.Rxf8+ Kxf8 White has no good discovered check with his knight, because the threat of Qc1+ is hanging over him. So Kasparov refused to continue the game. The captain of the Internet team has strongly denied all charges, pointing out that the players were being watched all the time. I don't know who is right. See what you think:

White: Garry Kasparov
Black: Internet Chess Club
1 d4 Nf6 16 Ng5 e3
2 c4 g6 17 cxd6 cxd6
3 Nc3 Bg7 18 fxc3 Bb6
4 e4 d6 19 Rxf8+ Oxf8
5 Be2 0-0 20 Ne4 Bxc3+
6 Ne3 e5 21 Kh1 Nf5
7 0-0 Nc6 22 Ra3 Bd4
8 d5 Ne7 23 Qd2 Qd8
9 b4 a5 24 Bg4 Ne7
10 Ba3 axb4 25 Bxc8 Qxc8
11 Bxb4 Nd7 26 Nxd6 Qd7
12 a4 f5 27 Rf3 Nxd5
13 a5 Nf6 28 Qa2 Qc6
14 e5 Nxe4 29 Rf1 Rf8
15 Nxe4 fxe4



CONCISE CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- With one's king under attack (2,5)
 - Avoids (5)
 - Eagle's nest (5)
 - Kenyan port (7)
 - Infectious disease (9)
 - Bird of prey (3)
 - Digs (6)
 - Small fish (6)
 - Enemy (3)
 - Yield (9)
 - Cuisine (7)
 - Front part of stage (5)
 - Subject to ebb and flows (5)
 - Worthy of remark (7)
- DOWN**
- Ancient British tribe (5)
 - Vehicle (3)
 - Carry out (7)
 - Japanese robe (6)
 - Latin American dance (5)
 - Plain (9)
 - Not deep (7)
 - Lie (9)
 - Shortfall (7)
 - Imprecise (7)
 - Coloured pencil (6)
 - Charm (5)
 - Area for shooting practice (5)
 - Bone (3)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:
ACROSS: 1 Harts, 4 Topping (Hearstopping), 8 Lampoon, 9 Niece, 10 Inner, 11 Related, 13 Glen, 15 Guinea, 17 Voyage, 20 Sore, 22 Replete, 24 David, 26 Great, 27 Popular, 28 Deserve, 29 Suede, DOWN: 1 Helping, 2 Roman, 3 Scourge, 4 Tenure, 5 Panel, 6 Inertia, 7 Greed, 12 Eavy, 14 Last, 16 Impress, 18 Oedipus, 19 Endorse, 21 Temple, 22 Rigid, 23 Enter, 25 Value.

BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

Love all; dealer West			
North			
♠ Q J 9			
♥ 7 4			
♦ A K 10 9 3			
♣ K 5 4			
West			
♠ A 5 2			
♥ 9 8 6 3 2			
♦ none			
♣ Q J 10 7 3			
East			
♠ 6 4			
♥ Q J 10 5			
♦ 7 5 4 2			
♣ A 8 6			
South			
♠ K 10 8 7 3			
♥ A K			
♦ Q J 8 6			
♣ 9 2			

West had a very clear idea as to how the defence should go on this deal, but unfortunately his partner was not on the same wavelength. Could he have made matters easier for East?

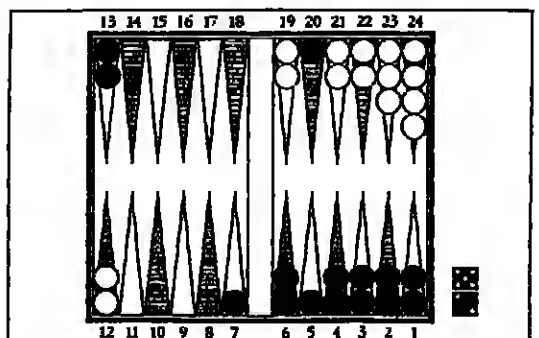
After a pass by West, North opened One Diamond, South responded One Spade, and now West came to life with Two Diamonds - a Michaels cue-bid, suggesting length in the uobid suits. North doubled - not because he expected his opponents to play there, but conventionally showing three-card support for spades. East passed, and South's jump to Four Spades ended the auction. (A save in Five Hearts by East-West would have cost only 100 points.)

West led ♠ Q against Four Spades and was allowed to hold the trick. He realised that the defenders could come to at most two club tricks and he continued with ♠ 3 to East's ace and awaited a diamond return.

He is still waiting, for East switched to the queen of hearts. East never got in again, and South was soon able to claim.

You might argue that the three of clubs was a clear suit preference signal, but West had a more direct way of clarifying the position. Suppose he switches to ♥ 9 at trick two. This makes it clear that he has nothing of value in the heart suit, and later, when he gets in with the ace of trumps, his second club lead will be sure to attract the right return.

BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY



This was a difficult decision which faced Wendy Kaplan in the final of the Illinois State Championship. At double match point Wendy - who remains the only woman ever to have won the World Championship - has a 52 to play.

As she is trailing in the race by 62 pips to 90, the running play 20/13 can quickly be discounted. There are three real choices: (a) 13/8, 13/11; (b) 13/8, 7/5; (c) 7/5, 6/1. All three plays have their merits. Play (a) keeps contact without damaging the home board; play (b) constructs a closed home board making any hit by Black a game winner, but leaves White a direct shot; play (c) maintains maximum contact at the cost of a weakening of the home board.

In the game, Wendy made the bold choice of 13/8, 7/5. Her opponent rolled 43 which he played 6/2, 6/3. On her next roll Wendy had to move her remaining man from her mid-point. White then rolled 51, played 13/7. Wendy rolled 62, hitting both blots with 20/18*12*, and easily won the game.

Wendy had made a bold play under pressure and reaped her due reward. The ability to play well under extreme pressure is the hallmark of a good player. And what of her choice of move?

Extensive roll-outs show that the best move is play (c), albeit not by much. The key thing for Black in this position is to hit a shot, and she should play the move that optimises her chances of a shot on the oxt roll. The slight damage to the home board is not as important as generating that possible shot. A good lesson in weighing the importance of different elements of a position.

15/HUNTING DEBATE



Battleline: While the debate raged, pro-Bill demonstrators confronted hunt supporters outside the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in Westminster. Photograph: Rui Xavis

How they voted on Bill for a ban	How they voted on Bill for a ban
<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know </p>	<p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know </p>

ABOUT ME- BACKING THE HUNTING BAN BILL

[illegible]

LABOUR MPs WHO VOTED AGAINST
 Ian Golding (Newcastle-under-Lyme), Kate Hoey (Maudslai).
LABOUR MPs WHO DID NOT VOTE
 Tony Blair (Edinburgh), David Blunkett (Bridgford), Gordon Brown (Dunfermline B), Tom Clarke (Coastbridge and Chrysostr), Harry Cohen (Lepton and Wansford), Robin Cook (Livingston), John Cummings (Easington), Dr Jack Cunningham (Copeland), Tom Dalyell (Linthlough), Donald Dewar (Glasgow Anniesland), Frank Dobson (Holborn and St Pancras), Frank Doran (Aberdeen Central), Gordon Douglas (Glasgow Central), David Ford (Belfast), Sam Galbraith (Glasgow North), George Galloway (Glasgow North West), Graham Smith (Strathclyde and Bearsden), Bruce Grieve (West Lothian), Graham (Renfrewshire W), Nigel Griffiths (Edinburgh S), Adam Ingram (East Kilbride), Peter Lilley (Liverpool Walton), Helen Liddell (Airdrie and Shroton), Tony Lloyd (Manchester Central), Rosemary McKenna (Cumbria and Kildare), Henry McLeish (Preston), John Mann (Barnsley), John Major (Wokingham), John Patten (Glasgow North East), Andrew Pelling (Barnsley North), Audrey Mitchell (Greenwich), John Morris (Aberavon), Kall Mounford (Colne Valley), John Prescott (Hull E), Ken Purvis (Wolverhampton N), Dr John Reid (Hamilton N and Bellshill), Clara Shoh (Birmingham Ladywood), Andrew Smith (Oxford E), Peter Seaton (West Lothian), John Smeeth (Barnsley South), John Spence (Glasgow North West), William (Dorchester Central), Tony Wardle (West Lothian), and Wynne.

LIBERAL DEPOSITS BACKING BUNTING BARE BILL.
Richard Attenborough (Sheffield Hallam), Norman Baker (Lewisham), Jackie Baldwin (Tunbridge Wells), Thomas Brake (Cardiff South and Wellington), Paul Burstow (Sutton and Cheam), Dr Vincent Cable (Twickenham), David Chidgey (Eastleigh), Brian Cluskey (Wrexham), John Gummer (Hillingdon), Peter Hain (Croydon), Michael Heseltine (Barnet and Hendon), Don Foster (Bech), Andrew George (St Giles), Donald Grant (Edinburgh W), Mike Hancock (Portsmouth S), Dr Brian Hawke (Oxford W and Abingdon), Simon Hughes as Goodson/Nairn N and Barnendon), Nigel Jones (Chesterham), Charles Kennedy (Glasgow Central), Kenneth Kinnock (Leeds North West), Lord Lester of Herneford (Epsom), Lord Rosser (K), David Randle (Newbury), Bob Russell (Colchester), Adrian Sanders (Torquay), Andrew Stansell (Hazel Grove), Matthew Taylor (North Devon and St Austell), Dr Jeremy Thorpe (Richmond Park), Prof Steven Webb (Turin), Phil Willis (Harrogate).

CONSERVATIVES BACKING HUNTING BAN BILL
David Amess (Southend W), David Adkinson (Bournemouth E), Stephen Day (Cheshire), Roger Gale (Thames N), John Randall (Uxbridge), John Taylor (Solihull), Sir Teddy Taylor (Rochford and Southend E), Ann Widdecombe (Maldstone and the Weald).

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Spies reveal Pretoria's dirty war on Winnie

Winnie Mandela was portrayed as the victim of a dirty propaganda war at yesterday's Truth and Reconciliation hearing. Mary Braid in Johannesburg says others accused her of being a police informer

Two former spies told the commission that British and American agents secretly helped the apartheid regime to spread rumours that Mrs Mandela was a child-killer, an alcoholic and a drug-user.

South African agents, it was claimed, placed this disinformation about Mrs Mandela in British newspapers.

Paul Erasmus, one of the South African agents, said members of the British Conservative Party's Monday Club were "principal agents" involved in spreading propaganda. His fellow operative, John Louis McPherson, claimed he had been given a list of friendly journalists.

But Azhar Cachalia, the chief ANC appointee in the Department for Safety and Security, said that during the late 1980s - when the murders and violent attacks Mrs Mandela was implicated in, including the killing of Stompie Seipei Mooketsi, 14, took place - many suspected she was a police spy.

"Just about everyone seemed to be aware that there were guerrillas and arms in the Mandela home," said Mr Cachalia, who was part of the leadership of the United Democratic Front, which publicly distanced itself from Mrs Mandela in 1989. He said it was difficult to understand why the

police did not raid her home at the height of the state of emergency. "Did they want to use what was happening around her home to discredit our president [Nelson Mandela] when he was released," he mused, shrugging his shoulders. "There were a million agendas."

A murky picture was further confused by an admission from the Police Commissioner, George Fivaz, that Jerry Richardson, former coach of the "Mandela Football Club" and now serving life for Stompie's murder, was a police spy. He was on the police payroll only two years ago. Mr Fivaz claimed he had provided information about other cases.

Richardson attended this week's hearings wearing the colours of the team that rarely took to the pitch but terrorised Soweto. Mr Cachalia said he thought Mrs Mandela was involved in the murder of Dr Abu Baker Asvat a few weeks after Stompie's murder.

The doctor is believed to have seen Stompie after he was beaten for three days at Mrs Mandela's home. Mr Cachalia said that because Mrs Mandela and the doctor had been close friends he had been unable to contemplate the possibility of her ordering the murder.

Mr Cachalia launched an emotional appeal to Mrs Mandela after a commissioner asked if his testimony was shaped by a "political agenda". The commissioner suggested he might be part of an Indian cabal within the ANC, which is hostile to "Africanists" such as Mrs Mandela. Mr Cachalia said: "Part of me wants to go up and hug you and say 'Let us go away from all this'... But another part of me says we cannot go forward unless there is accountability."



Head cases: Candy Rosa Turcios, a Liberal Party worker, at an information centre in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. In presidential and general elections tomorrow the Liberal candidate, Carlos Flores Facusse, is expected to win the top post Photograph: AP

Japan puts Nasa in space

Japan launched a foreign satellite with its own rocket for the first time yesterday, boosting the nation's satellite-launching technology and chances of developing a lucrative space programme.

The H-2 rocket, carrying a satellite designed to study tropical and subtropical rainfall, lifted off from Tanegashima Space Centre in southern Japan.

The tropical rainfall measuring mission satellite was developed at a cost of 33 billion yen (\$260m) by Nasa, the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

—Tokyo (AP)

Indian coalition collapses

The powerful Congress Party withdrew support from India's ruling coalition yesterday, forcing the Prime Minister to resign in the third government collapse in less than two years.

"We have withdrawn support to the United Front government under I.K. Gujral. We have communicated this to the president," Congress chief Sitaram Kesri said, referring to the Prime Minister. Hours later, a spokesman announced Mr Gujral's resignation. Mr Kesri, during a 30-minute meeting with President K.R. Narayanan earlier in the day, had staked Congress's claim to form the next government.

"We are sure, given a chance, we would be able to prove our majority on the floor of the

house," he said in a letter to the president released to reporters. The President is India's constitutional head of state.

Congress abandoned Mr Gujral's seven-month-old, 14-party United Front government after accusing one of its members of supporting rebels linked to the 1991 assassination of party leader and former Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi. Congress and the Front came together in 1996 to keep the Bharatiya Janata Party from forming a government. Mr Gujral is the second prime minister to lead the nation and the United Front, after Congress withdrew support from a previous Front chief deemed ineffective in March.

—AP, New Delhi

Mob backs Pakistan PM

Government supporters stormed Pakistan's Supreme Court yesterday to demand the resignation of Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah for putting Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on trial for contempt of court. Demonstrators climbed over railings as dozens of riot police looked on and did nothing. The demonstrators called on Shah to step down and end weeks of constitutional crisis caused by a showdown between Sharif, the judiciary and President Farooq Leghari. The confrontation has paralysed politics and unnerved financial markets.

Reuters

Mugabe buys 1,500 farms on the cheap

The Zimbabwean government gazetted yesterday a list of 1,503 farms, owned mostly by white farmers, that it has earmarked to forcibly buy for a controversial peasant resettlement programme.

Political and economic analysts say the drive has severely undermined the southern African state's investment image, and is likely to damage its fragile economy and its chances of securing aid from the West.

The hit list includes company-owned property such as Nuanetsi Ranch Ltd, whose farm of more than 310,000 hectares in south-eastern Zimbabwe is the largest single block to be earmarked for the programme. It also includes ranches in the south-west owned by the Oppenheimer family of South Africa's gold mining group Anglo American Corporation.

The government, which says it will pay only for equipment and improvements but not the land, invited those with "genuine grounds" for objecting to designation of the farms to lodge their complaints by 28 December. The government list contains more than a dozen farms owned by black farmers, although they do not include those of senior government officials, some of whom own several farms.

President Robert Mugabe said he was pressing ahead with the controversial land reform programme because it is crucial to achieving social justice.

The mainly white Commercial Farmers Union (CFU) said in a statement yesterday that it had emphasised to the government that land reform "for whatever reason" must be judged on how it contributes to economic growth, greater food security and job creation and stability.

The government did not say when it would actually take control of the 1,503 farms earmarked. But in October, Mr Mugabe said this would happen "in the year of our Lord 1997".

Mr Mugabe's plans have stirred anger and anxiety in the country's commercial farming heartland, where many say there is already enough land on the open market for the resettlement programme. The government wants to acquire some 5.5 million hectares (13.7 million acres) - about half the land owned by white farmers.

Mr Mugabe, who has ruled since independence in 1980, says that Britain, the former colonial master, should pay for the land which he said was seized by British immigrants when they colonised the country in the 1890s. Britain has refused, arguing the farmers were now Zimbabwean citizens.

—Harare, Reuters

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17/ASYLUM SEEKERS

THE INDEPENDENT
SATURDAY 29 NOVEMBER 1997
17



Rough justice: Paul, a former resident at Campsfield House Detention Centre. Inmates claim they are subjected to racial abuse

Synod backs rethink on immigration

We need to rethink our policy on asylum seekers. That was the message from the General Synod yesterday. *Care Garner* says they may have their prayers answered when the Government unveils the results of its policy review in January.

which was worded under the Tory government, was amended to drop the call for a total amnesty for all these people.

The Bishop of Worcester, the Right Rev Peter Selby, said the issue was a test "not just of our compassion but a fundamental component of our mission to the country". He warned against the "fear of the stranger" and said Christians must convey the message that "those who entertain strangers may be entertaining angels unaware."

The issue of asylum seekers is surrounded by ignorance and fear, and the agenda dictated by racism and xenophobia, the General Synod heard yesterday.

Introducing his private member's motion at Church House, Westminster, the Rev David Houlding, from the London diocese, condemned the "fundamental injustices" in the 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act which removed all benefits from asylum seekers unless they had declared themselves at port of entry into Britain.

Mr Houlding said that, while there would always be those who take advantage of the system or even abuse it, talk of "bogus" asylum seekers was unacceptable. Nor should the recent arrival of refugees in Kent distract from the fundamental issue.

He also urged the Government to deal with the backlog of the 55,000 asylum seekers in Britain who are awaiting a decision. However, the motion,

Last week Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, gave a speech to the Refugee Council promising that Labour was bringing a "new spirit of openness" to the asylum issue. He promised that in January Labour would be announcing "policies and practices which are well-informed, properly considered, and founded in reason and principle."

But Mr Houlding remains unconvinced, saying: "there has been no clear indication that they will repeal the Act or that they will restore the right to benefit for asylum seekers."

The final motion, which was backed unanimously, expressed the Church's continuing concern about the effects of British asylum, immigration and nationality law. It welcomed the Government's commitment to a "fairer, firmer system" and called for a law which is "humane and non-discriminatory, and which enjoys the confidence of all our communities."

Britain's four-letter welcome for the frightened

Britain treats many asylum-seekers as criminals who deserve both punishment and humiliation. Steve Groushaw talks to those at the sharp end who still hope that things might change.

In the visitors' reception area of Campsfield House - just inside the high perimeter fence, topped by double rolls of razor-wire - a printed poster proclaims Group Four's code of conduct with regard to the detainees. This includes the commitment to be "courteous, impartial, and free of racial bias".

Curious, then, that "fuck you" is a form of address frequently used by the private security guards, when answering detainees' questions. Odd, too, that African asylum-seekers say they are told: "This isn't a black country", when they ask for an explanation of why they are being held behind bars.

Campsfield briefly found itself back in the headlines earlier this year when inmates rioted. According to the official version, the "premeditated" riot showed the violent tendencies of the inmates. But according to detainees' accounts, the riot was the culmination of a series of provocations by the guards.

Whatever the truth of the events behind this summer's riots, it is clear that the purpose-built detention centre - a two-storey red-brick building, tucked away along a quiet Oxfordshire country road - does little to suggest that foreigners might be welcome. The 200 inmates have committed no crimes. And yet, the repeated frisking of all visitors and the long list of prohibited items (cig-

arettes and phonecards are among the few items that you are allowed to bring in) are just one reminder that the treatment of Campsfield detainees would be little different if they were drug-smugglers or thieves.

Officially, the inmates of Campsfield (which opened as a detention centre in 1993) are behind bars because they are perceived as being at risk of absconding. In reality, one important purpose seems to be merely to discourage others - at a weekly cost of hundreds of pounds per person. From the Home Office's point of view, the more asylum-seekers who can be persuaded that Britain is not a pleasant place to be, the better.

For some, the risk of returning home is considerable. Sylvia comes from Ogoniland in Nigeria - the native region of the writer Keo Saro-Wiwa, executed amidst international protests in 1995. Sylvia's parents were both the victims of political murder. Her sister was raped, and she was attacked. The political context is clear: several members of the family were active in an Ogoni movement which displeased the authorities. Sylvia, who was studying information technology, describes the events in a deliberately steady voice, with only an occasional tremor. She now needs constant medical treatment, related to stress. She is convinced that she would be a target if she returned.

Complainers are routinely punished. Newly released detainees, and those still at Campsfield, say that asking questions immediately gets you moved from the relative comfort of Campsfield into a conventional prison. The riot in August began with a trivial spark: the transfer to prison of a detainee who had complained that inmates were not allowed

to watch television. "Every day they abuse you and swear at you," says a recently released inmate.

Many at Campsfield give the impression that the spirit has been beaten out of them. Sylvia's uncle recently told her: "Come back - even if it is to die. Better to die at home than to be in prison there." Critics believe that the official policy-makers would regard that as a kind of success: it would unambiguously convey the message that the UK is not a welcoming destination.

Hakim, a former Algerian policeman, talks of the political violence in his home country that is now encouraged by the authorities themselves, and which persuaded him to leave. "If you don't kill, you are killed." He argues that if his case were being considered while he was living outside, then he would feel more like a human being. "How could I abscond?" he asks. "I've nowhere to go."

Paul, an Angolan recently released from Campsfield, argues that the detention centre is intended to be as depressing as possible. "It's harder than at home. They're trying to kill you bit by bit. Your world is the limit - the borders of Campsfield are your borders." He talks of the casual, built-in racism of the system. "When I tried to say something, they would treat me as though I am from the bush. They would say: 'You deserve this treatment'."

Immigration policy is full of problems without solutions. Those countries which offer a politically better life usually offer a materially better life, too. It is therefore difficult to disentangle the issues of economic and political asylum. The anti-asylum lobby argues that they are only here in search of more money. The pro-asylum

lobby suggests that asylum-seekers are only here because of political freedom. In reality, the two inevitably overlap. There are few *Vaclav Havel*s in the world today - those who selflessly work for their country to be less totalitarian, whatever the cost. Most are keen to escape for a more complex variety of reasons - including the fear of political violence and civil war.

If they are lucky, those reasons are compelling enough for them to be allowed to stay in Britain; if they are unlucky, the fact that they might lose their jobs or their lives if they return home is considered to be merely incidental.

Either way, critics suggest that there is no good reason why the ritual humiliation should continue of those who hope against hope that they will be al-

lowed to stay. The existing policy has what one regular visitor to Campsfield calls a "completely arbitrary" character, where the quality of mercy is severely strained. Annette Hyder, who works with released detainees in Oxford, notes that the depressions are made worse by uncertainty. "With a prison sentence, at least you have an idea of how long it's for. At Campsfield, you know nothing."

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Cyprus deal threatened by Greece

Greece yesterday issued its bluntest warning yet that it will block Turkey's participation in next February's planned EU enlargement conference in London. *Rupert Cornwell* says the feud threatens to derail one of Britain's most cherished diplomatic initiatives.

The bone of contention, yet again, is the divided island of Cyprus, with whose internationally recognised Greek-Cypriot government the European Union will open entry negotiations next year - to the delight of Athens but the undisputed fury of Ankara, whose own application for membership of the EU has again put on hold.

After talks here with Tony Blair, the Greek Prime Minister, Costas Simitis, was adamant: unless Turkey played by the rules of the European club and dropped its threats to incorporate the Turkish-Cypriot third of the island, "Greece is prepared to prevent Turkey taking part" in the unprecedented gathering of current and aspiring EU member countries. But just a mile away from the Greek embassy residence where Mr Simitis was speaking to journalists, a top Turkish diplomat declared that Ankara would leave no stone unturned to have the entry negotiations with Cyprus declared illegal because they were in breach of existing treaties.

Inal Batu, in charge of Cyprus affairs at the Turkish foreign ministry, told a conference on Cyprus that Brussels should put the accession negotiations with the island on hold until both Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities were represented in its government.

For Britain, which aims to make the kick-off of enlargement talks the centrepiece of its EU presidency in 1998, Greece's stance is a major worry. Technically, Britain can invite whoever it likes to the conference, which will open in Buckingham Palace. In practice though, a deal will have to be worked out at the forthcoming EU summit in Luxembourg, which is expected to endorse the European Commission's recommendation that entry negotiations begin with Poland, Hungary, the Czech republic, Slovenia, Estonia and Cyprus - but not the eternally jilted suitor Turkey.

Greece apart, most if not all EU countries are happy to have Ankara there. But the conditions set out by Mr Simitis yesterday seem to leave scant room for manoeuvre. "This is not an idle threat," a Foreign Office official admitted last night, "but we have to hope it can be overcome."

Upping Athens' earlier demands, the Greek prime minister said not only must Turkey drop its attempts to prevent the negotiations with Cyprus, but it must improve its human rights record and accept the jurisdiction of the International Court in the Hague - which Greece believes favours its position in the separate dispute with Ankara over territorial waters.



A woman kissing the hand of Tony Blair during his visit to the Sarajevo market

Photograph: Dajir Sagol

Troops will stay in Bosnia, Blair says

Tony Blair signalled yesterday that he was prepared to keep British peace-keeping troops in Bosnia "to see this thing through".

The Prime Minister flew to Bosnia, ravaged by war between 1992 and 1995, for a six-hour morale-boosting visit to British troops serving with the Nato-led Stabilisation Force (S-FOR).

"The reasons for getting in here in the first place and the reasons for staying are still

here, and I think it is important we see this thing through," he declared.

Mr Blair, seeking to underline Britain's commitment to Nato-led peace-keeping operations, flew in through thick fog to Banja Luka, the main town in the Bosnian Serb republic. There, he held a 15-minute meeting at the airport with the Bosnian Serb President, Biljana Plavsic, in a show of British support for her leadership.

Mrs Plavsic has pledged to abide by the 1995 Dayton peace agreement for Bosnia and waged a power struggle against her hardline nationalist opponents.

He toured a huge derelict engineering factory where British troops are housed, and ate a greasy hot dog before inspecting Warrior armoured

fighting vehicles and climbing onto a Challenger tank.

Most of the 5,000-strong British contingent is based in the Banja Luka region. The British soldiers have played a pivotal role in the conflict pitting the Western-backed Plavsic against hardliners loyal to Radovan Karadzic, the wartime Serb leader indicted for war crimes.

Hundreds of British soldiers in armoured vehicles surrounded police stations this summer in Banja Luka to enable Mrs Plavsic to remove hardline opponents and assert control over police units in the area. British troops were also involved in a shoot-out in the Bosnian Serb town of Prijedor in July, in which one war crimes suspect was shot dead and another arrested and sent for tri-

al at the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague.

Mr Blair said that bringing war criminals to justice was an important part of the British role in bringing peace to Bosnia, which he described as "an incredible achievement".

Mr Blair's visit comes a week before Nato defence ministers meet to discuss the future of the Bosnia peacekeeping mission, which has about six months left in its 18-month mandate.

Western governments have indicated they intend to extend the peacekeeping operation beyond June 1998, but the precise size and nature of a follow-on force has yet to be decided.

— Reuters
Banja Luka

Cook goes CAP in hand to EU Union hopefuls

Negotiations to extend membership of the European Union to five former Soviet bloc countries of Central and Eastern Europe will open on 31 March under Britain's chairmanship of the EU, the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, announced yesterday. In Warsaw on the final leg of a three-nation visit to prepare the ground, Mr Cook committed Britain to promoting a radical shake-up of the EU's hugely expensive and inefficient farm policy. The CAP would cause food prices in Poland and the other applicant states to spiral if applied in its present form, he warned.

"The European Union's agricultural policy has major implications for Central Europe... Why should the Polish shopping basket cost more just because Poland has joined the European Union? Poland's economy is heavily farm dependent, with more than a quarter of the workforce employed on the land, but Mr Cook said the CAP must be made to respond to the needs of farmers in Eastern Europe as well as those in the existing member-states. If Central European agriculture was to develop, the CAP would have to shift from subsidies for production to direct support for rural communities."

Katherine Butler, Warsaw

Paris panic over sex killer

Hysteria has spread in Paris after police announced they were hunting a serial killer suspected of killing three women in their homes by slitting their throats after raping them. Media speculation that the killer may have committed other murders and the gory detailed reporting of his crimes have had a big impact in a France used to seeing serial murders as an American phenomenon. The killer, described as North African, athletic and between 25 and 30 years old, apparently followed his victims home and pushed them inside, as there were no sign of forced entry.

Reuters - Paris

Chechnens rebuff Yeltsin

The Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, said he planned a good-will visit to Chechnya in January. But a Chechen official said an empty-handed trip could prompt the break-up of the entire Caucasus. Mr Yeltsin said his aim was to size up the economy, shattered during Russia's 21-month war against Chechnya, and erode separatist tendencies. "I will name only the month - January, though I know the exact day already," Mr Yeltsin said. "This will... work against our separation." But the Chechen First Deputy Prime Minister, Movladi Udogov, said Chechnya wanted to see concrete results.

Reuters - Moscow

Judge quits porn video case

The National Court removed a judge from one of the most sensitive cases in Spain, one involving a sexually explicit video allegedly featuring a muckracking newspaper editor. Judge Javier Gomez de Llano was removed by the court at his own request after it agreed his independence had been compromised by testimony that he himself might be in another videotape that has not been distributed yet.

The action comes a week after Judge Gomez opened the inquiry into allegations that ex-officials of the previous Socialist government produced and distributed a pornographic video to discredit Pedro Ramirez, editor of *El Mundo*, a major daily.

AP - Madrid

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£100,000 or more	Annually	7.30	5.84	£100,000 or more	Monthly	7.11**	5.69
£25,000-£99,999	Annually	7.05	5.64	£25,000-£99,999	Monthly	6.93**	5.54
£10,000-£24,999	Annually	6.90	5.52	£10,000-£24,999	Monthly	6.74**	5.39
£100-£999	Annually	6.15	4.92				
£100,000 or more	Monthly	7.07**	5.65	£9,000	Annually	7.50%	Tax-free
£25,000-£99,999	Monthly	6.83**	5.47				
£10,000-£24,999	Monthly	6.69**	5.35	Maximum permitted under TESSA rules	Annually	7.00%	Tax-free
£5,000-£9,999	Monthly	5.98**	4.79	£1,000 or more	Annually	5.50%	Tax-free
£100,000 or more	Annually	6.25	5.00	£25,000 or more	Annually	3.90	3.12
£25,000-£99,999	Annually	5.90	4.72	£10,000-£24,999	Annually	3.40	3.72
£10,000-£24,999	Annually	5.45	4.36	£100-£999	Annually	2.25	1.80
£100-£999	Annually	5.10	4.08	£25,000 or more	Monthly	3.83**	3.07
£100,000 or more	Monthly	6.08**	4.86	£10,000-£24,999	Monthly	3.35**	2.68
£25,000-£99,999	Monthly	5.75**	4.60	£5,000-£9,999	Monthly	2.23**	1.78
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£10,000-£24,999	Annually	6.15	4.92	£100-£999	Annually	6.22**	4.98
£100,000 or more	Monthly	6.55**	5.34	£10,000-£24,999	Monthly	5.75**	4.60
£25,000-£99,999	Monthly	6.41**	5.15	£10,000-£24,999	Monthly	5.32**	4.25
£10,000-£24,999	Monthly	6.08**	4.86	£5,000-£9,999	Monthly	4.98**	3.99
£5,000-£9,999	Monthly	5.98**	4.79				
				£25,000 or more	Annually	5.90	4.72
£100,000 or more	Annually	6.25	5.00	£10,000-£24,999	Annually	5.45	4.36
£25,000-£99,999	Annually	5.90	4.72	£100-£999	Annually	5.10	4.08
£10,000-£24,999	Annually	5.45	4.36	£25,000 or more	Monthly	5.75**	4.60
£100-£999	Annually	5.10	4.08	£10,000-£24,999	Monthly	5.32**	4.25
£100,000 or more	Monthly	6.08**	4.86	£5,000-£9,999	Monthly	4.98**	3.99
£25,000-£99,999	Monthly	5.75**	4.60				
£10,000-£24,999	Monthly	5.32**	4.25	£100 or more	Half yearly	1.85	1.48
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German PCs get all PC

"Full-bodied" and "flat-chested" are out. *Negroids* and *indianoids* are banned, and German regional accents must remain unrecognised.

Such are the new orders of Germany's policepersons, after a purge of their vocabulary by the brigade of political correctness discovered serious shortcomings. A 13-year-old code of approved terminology must now be rewritten with the offending words blacked out.

It all started with an innocent-looking complaint from a Lutheran youth group, criticising certain "National Socialist racial classifications" employed by the forces of law and order. People of African origin were routinely described in police files as "negroid", and Indians - not the Native American variety - as "indianoid".

Such a charge is not to be taken lightly and the authorities immediately got to work. Two years on, their long-awaited report has been published and acted upon. "It's a fair cop," they told the Lutherans. There is to be none of that negroid stuff from now on. Blacks are to be referred to, instead, as *afrikanisch*.

During their exhaustive search, the linguistic patrolpersons also uncovered other offensive descriptions. All too often, witnesses or suspects were described by inappropriate adjectives, such as "full-bodied" and "flat-chested". The inspectors also objected to descriptions of regional accents, such as "Pomeranian", "Silesian" and "East Prussian".

But at least Bavaria, the most conservative *Land*, with the funniest accent to boot, does not have to worry. Arguing that not all Africans are black, the Bavarian interior ministry has opted out of the new guidelines. So, for a while longer, some suspects in Munich will remain "negroid", flat-chested or otherwise.

— Imre Karacs, Bonn

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THE INDEPENDENT
SATURDAY 29 NOVEMBER 1997
19

Cook wants loot to go directly to the survivors

Robin Cook wants to use £40m of gold bullion in the vaults of the Bank of England to compensate victims of the Holocaust and their families. At present, 15 governments whose gold reserves were pilfered during the war want the money. Our Correspondent reports from Warsaw.

A bleak siding at Umschlagplatz, near the centre of Warsaw, was the last sight of freedom for 300,000 Polish Jews. From this spot between 1942 and 1943, they were rounded up, loaded into cattle trucks and transported to Auschwitz.

In biting wind, standing at the same desolate site yesterday, the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, laid a wreath to honour the Warsaw Ghetto victims, to mourn what he called the "tremendously tragic pointless waste of so much human life".

He also pledged to press the international community to "set the record straight" and end the wrangling which has denied Holocaust survivors and other Nazi victims the right to know what happened to billions in

The three-day conference would have to bring "all the facts into the open," he said. "Those who suffered so, yet still survive, deserve to know the full truth."

About 240 delegates from the 41 countries and a number of Jewish organisations will be attending the Nazi-gold conference in London.

The stated purpose of the conference is historical. It will examine where gold looted by the Nazis during the war came from and what happened to it.

It will review what has already been done to make good the losses suffered by countries and to make restitution to individuals. And it will examine the case for further compensation.

Almost \$4bn of gold looted by the Nazis and recovered by the Allies after the war has been handed back to occupied countries such as Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg whose gold reserves were looted by the Germans.

Some five tonnes of the recovered gold pool - less than 2 per cent - remains in the Bank of England, worth around £40m.

It is this symbolic amount that Britain wants to see handed over for the benefit of individual survivors and their families.

While 15 countries have laid claim to the remaining gold, the proposal from the three - Britain, France and the US - which made up the Allied Tripartite Gold Commission after the war, is that governments should relinquish their demands and agree that the money should instead go to individual victims.

Foreign Office research has concluded that of the gold held in the Bank of England at least some must be private assets, in other words smelted-down gold teeth and items of jewellery taken from victims. Allied forces found boards of gold stashed near the concentration camps.

"There is a strong likelihood that some personal gold, including teeth and jewellery, were mixed up with monetary gold," a Foreign Office spokesman said. British officials said the Government would be appealing to the goodwill of participants at the conference rather than on the basis of any legal evidence on the ownership of what remains.

"This is a moral question: we have money for distribution, the remaining survivors are getting older, so the next few years will be the last chance to deal with it during their lifetimes," said a spokesman. A minor setback is that a report on British policy towards enemy property frozen in Britain at the end of the war is not yet complete and will be published after the conference. It has been suggested that some assets remain in British banks which could and should have been returned to victims of Nazism. And one official warned yesterday that the conference should not be seen as a "quick fix". At least 10 years' minimum work is needed on an international scale before these questions are resolved.

Today some £40m still remains to be distributed. Britain has proposed that the remaining gold be used to set up a fund to compensate individual Holocaust victims and their families, particularly those who so far have received little or no compensation for their suffering. But the Foreign Secretary also called on participating countries, which include the Swiss and other neutrals whose banks are thought to have hoarded vast amounts of money deposited by Jews before the war, to "set the record straight".

BY KATHERINE BUTLER

gold and other assets stolen or hidden from them since the war.

The markings of the old railway line are still visible at Umschlagplatz. On the stark white marble monument covered with the names of victims it says simply: "Along this path of suffering and death over 300,000 Jews were driven from the Warsaw Ghetto to the gas chambers of the Nazi extermination camps."

After his visit to the memorial Mr Cook said: "Keeping alive the memory of the Nazi victims is our duty, as is reparation to those who survive."

Mr Cook used his visit to the memorial to propose the launch of a £40m fund which for the first time would direct help to individual concentration-camp survivors and their families. Britain wants backing for the reparation fund when representatives of 41 governments gather from Tuesday to try to unravel with historians and other experts the full mystery of gold looted by the Nazis.

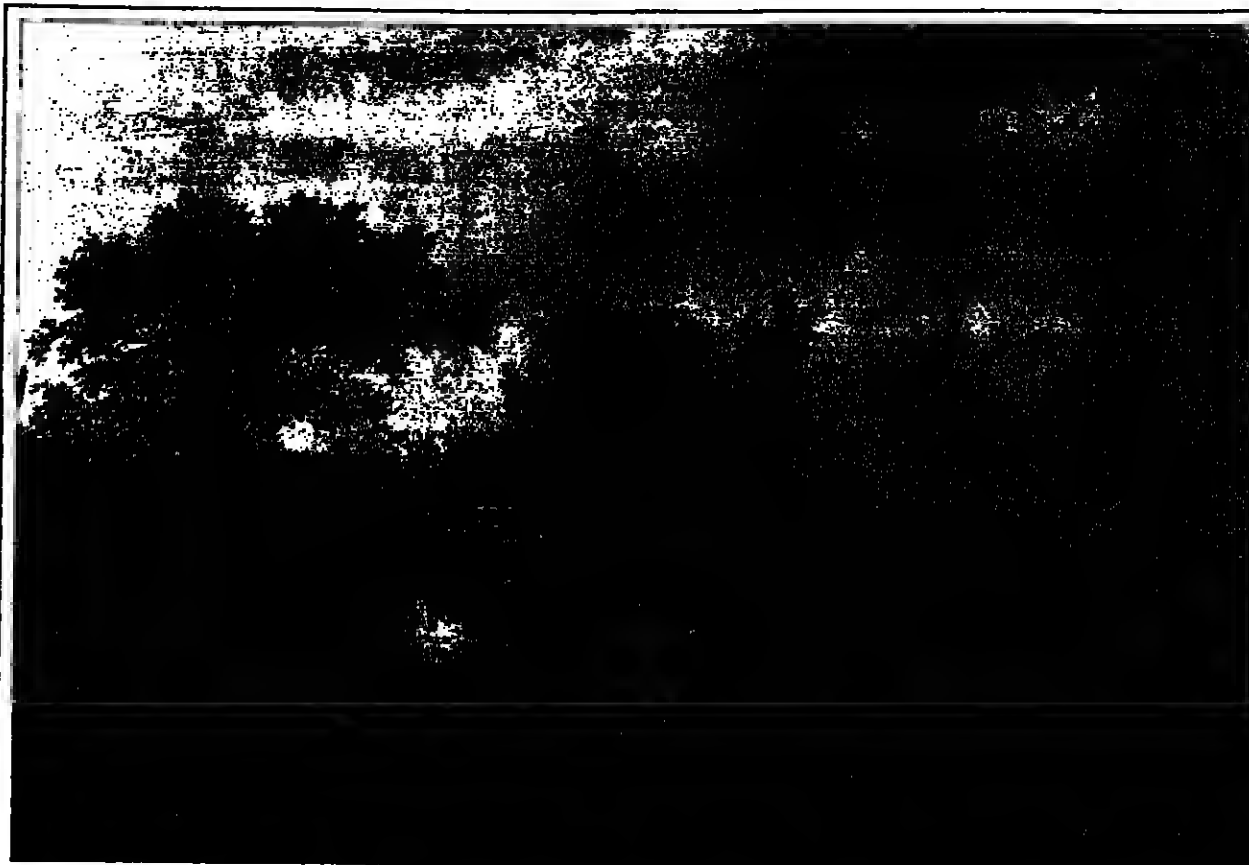
"Today some £40m still remains to be distributed. Britain has proposed that the remaining gold be used to set up a fund to compensate individual Holocaust victims and their families, particularly those who so far have received little or no compensation for their suffering. But the Foreign Secretary also called on participating countries, which include the Swiss and other neutrals whose banks are thought to have hoarded vast amounts of money deposited by Jews before the war, to "set the record straight".

Lenin's Swiss bank account discovered

Swiss bank officials sifting through dormant accounts have made an unexpected discovery. Among those not claimed since the Second World War lies an account in the name of Vladimir Lenin, containing the princely sum of 12,900 Swiss Francs. According to yesterday's *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, this Mr Lenin is the very same man who was later to rise to world fame as Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. The revolutionary leader lived in Zurich until April 1917, when German agents worried about the danger of the war on the eastern front huddled him out of the city. The rest, as they say, is history. A train heading for Petrograd. The rest, as they say, is history. Lenin had opened his savings account with the Zürcher Kantonalbank shortly before that fateful journey. It was from this account that he was to pay his membership dues to the local branch of the Bolshevik party.

In his hasty departure, he took the party with him, but not the account, whose contents have been underpinning Swiss capitalism ever since. One of Lenin's nieces is now claiming the loot, including interest.

—Imre Karacs, Bonn



Old Master painting may be handed back

If the Nazis stole a valuable 17th-century painting during the Second World War, it will be returned or donated to a museum, the owners said after it was withdrawn from auction.

Peter Henle, son of the German collector Guenther Henle, said in a letter to the London branch of Sotheby's that his family would look for the victim and return the painting if it was stolen.

It was to have been auctioned at next week. The letter was released to *The Boston Globe*, which first reported the painting's dubious ownership background. Should the victim turn out to be Jewish with no descendants, the letter said, the painting, *A dune landscape with two figures by a fence* (left), by Jacob van Ruisdael, would be donated to "an appropriate museum or gallery in Israel."

If no evidence of Nazi looting exists and no victim can be found, the family would meet again "to settle the disposition of the picture." *The Globe* said Sotheby's listed the painting with a notation showing it had been acquired for a museum Hitler planned to build in the Austrian city of Linz.

Guenther Henle, an industrialist and political architect of the post-war Christian Democratic government in Germany, bought the painting in 1961 from the Amsterdam dealer Pierre de Boer, who helped the Nazis obtain 300 paintings during the war.

On Soltes, director of Washington's National Jewish Museum, said the Henles' effort "is as correct as one could hope for, and reflects a sensitivity for rapprochement."

AP - Boston

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Will they get us to the wedding on time? Forget France, the assembled Complicite company chose to gather at Audley End instead

Photograph: Stephen Vaughan

One wedding and, luckily, no one's funeral

Theatre de Complicite are Britain's leading 'physical theatre' company. Who better to bring John Berger's novel *To the Wedding* to the airwaves? Roger Elsgood, producer of tomorrow night's Radio 3 version, kept a diary of their work in progress.

John Berger is having a thought and, my word, it's a massive one. He's wandering around the room clutching his cranium, as if he's frightened to let it go, holding on to his head with an intensity that matches the process going on inside. I've seen this happen before but, when it occurs, it's always spectacular. I stand and stare, amazed at this conspicuous display of creativity. He's trying to solve a problem, his problem, our problem: how to re-create his novel *To the Wedding* as a drama for radio.

It's early March. The first workshop day. We're in an RSC rehearsal room in Clapham - a room big enough to try out chariot racing. Earlier that day, John had Eurostared in from Paris with an enormous basket of cherries - "picked from the garden this morning". Waiting to work with him are Lilo Baur (Lucie, in the last *Berger/Complicite* collaboration, *The Three Lives of Lucie Cabrol*), Katria Cartledge (fresh from starring in Mike Leigh's *Career Girls*),

a clutch of Complicite actors, director Simon McBurney, co-adaptor Mark Wheatley and me. I can feel a creative charge in the air and almost hear the distant rustle of expensive leaps of the imagination.

Our first major problem is that both John and Simon want to change the character of the narrator. They feel that a blind Greek (and seller is not what is wanted). But what is? Sitting around the table, we kick around a few ideas punctuated by several longuets, a few coughs, and no solutions. It's then we become aware of John circling the room thinking. He's on another planet, orbiting with his intellect, no longer aware of the place, the time, us.

Eventually he lands. He's back, only he's talking to himself. "I mean... [long pause] the narrator has to be a... [pause] - a river! The Po! The longest river in Italy!" Now, why didn't we think of that!

Having made three previous programmes with John, I knew it could be like this, but having never worked with Complicite before, I had no idea of the turns this production would take before it was finished. It was also the first time they had worked as a company for radio. Complicite has built a reputation on the triumphal physicality of its stagings: the hand-held bridge of bamboo poles the cast fashioned in their recent RNT production of Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, created in seconds yet robust enough to allow Juliet Stevenson to walk across;

the breathtaking interplay with the set that characterised *Lucie Cabrol*; the involvement by all the cast seemingly at all times; the insistence on teasing out ideas, testing things. Testing me.

Several months later, I found myself at 10 o'clock at night with a bunch of actors on the beach at Frinton-on-Sea, waiting for Mick Barnfather to run naked into the North Sea. The mere fact of this being radio in no way inhibits the Complicite approach to physical theatre. Mick has been dreading this moment all day and as he waits for Simon's "Action!" even the shingle is shimmering. Meticulously, no re-takes are required. The bad news is that, getting dressed afterwards, he can't find his watch. We borrow a torch from a Frinton night-fisherman, who asks us not to shine it on the water - "the fish don't like it". (The fact that they don't take too kindly to being hauled out of the water and bashed over the head with a cricket bat doesn't seem to worry him.) This unscribed surreal drama is brought to a sad conclusion when we fail to find Mick's watch. The wine-dark sea has claimed it, a gift from his father and the only casualty of a very long day that began 50 miles away at Audley End House, where we recorded the wedding scenes with 35 Complicite actors - the largest gathering of the company for many years.

In the same way that Complicite make strange things happen, strange things happen to them. For weeks prior to the recording, Simon and Judith Dimant, Complicite's administrative producer, have been trying in vain to cast Gino, the Italian who wants to marry Ninon. Good Italian actors are hard to find in London in July - they're all in Italy, if they have any sense - and Judith is struggling. Sandro Mabelini, a student from Florence, once saw a Complicite show and was impressed. He thought, while he was in London, he should get himself on their mailing list. With nothing better to do, he went and rang their doorbell. "Er, 'ello, I am, er, a student..." The Complicite intercom crackled with a distinctly Italian accent. "A drama student?" "Yes, I read English OK." And so Sandro Mabelini walked in off the street and into a leading role with Complicite. He couldn't believe his luck. Neither could we. The perfect Gino.

South-west France: a hot August night. Not Neil Diamond - and no Complicite. The original plan was to record the wedding scenes in the long quiet field behind the house. But that was just a plan and, if working with Complicite means anything, it means plans are made for changing. I get a phone call from Simon, who is working on the script with John in the Alps. They aren't happy. The script isn't ready. Complicite are not coming. Simon tells me that he wants this production to be one which, on our deathbeds, we can all look back on as something to be proud of.

I agree. But this is going to cost big money. The budget's going into orbit. I use the time to record background material. We need the sound of the motorbike that Ninon's father Jean rides across France and Italy to the wedding. "Nothing less than 1000cc," said John on the phone. Outside a café in a tiny village, a gift from the gods, a 1250cc V-Max Yamaha. "Oui," said Bernard, at 42 a seasoned Yamaha man. "BBC? Bien sûr."

After doing the easy stuff - stops, starts, slow coming - Bernard takes us to a long, hot road like somewhere in *Easy Rider* for the big take, the high-speed pass. We stop at a wayside garage and he explains that he will go to a point out of sight, wait for a gap in the traffic and then - "à l'attaque!" As he vanishes, we set up a DAT machine by the roadside with John Hunt, our sound designer, holding a mike on a fishpole. This has a miraculous effect on passing motorists, who assume we're a speed trap. We take great pleasure in watching a succession of sudden rear brake lights going on. Bernard disappears into the heat haze and we wait. A tiny yellow light appears in the distance. At 225 kph, he's up and at us and out of sight in no time, man and machine as one, like John in Clapham. In a world of his own.

We need to re-create a party in Grenoble circa 1970. Jane, our French fixer, has come up with a willing troupe of local amateur actors who, for a buy-out of supper and as much wine as they can drink, are prepared to party for us. Amateurs they may be but they insist on a full workshop first. Our neighbour, Michel, catches the mood and gives an impromptu seminar. We bear "Marie Quant... le Rollin Stones... Alexandre Dubček... 'Apples' punctuating his French. The young aspirants catch on as easily as he punches up the past and in no time they are able to transport us to swinging Grenoble. A great take, but one that eventually went to wherever digital sound bites go when they are deleted. Around 1am our guests begin to leave. Last out is Michel, who five minutes later is back to tell us that our actors, fuelled with party spirit, have turned their car into a ditch. We go to their help and, as we get closer, see the moonlit lane strewn with a carnage of bodies. It's a full 10 heart-stopping seconds before we realise that the local thespians have used the opportunity to impress us with their acting skills by workshoping everyone's worst nightmare.

The Complicite approach is proving contagious. Back in London, late September, and everything is finally recorded. In the BBC Maida Vale Studios, not only has Simon got a great sound designer to work with, he's also got the full might of the BBC Radiophonic Workshop. For a director, this is like Christmas and Hamleys rolled into one. Delivery deadlines pass, clocks tick and hills mount. Simon edits on. The result is... out of this world. Listen for yourself. *To the Wedding*, 7.30pm tomorrow, Radio 3

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New European Writers
Royal Court, London

The Royal Court's New European Writers' Season, which the imagination to places and modes of feeling not normally encountered much in the English theatre. *Bazaar*, by the talented young Spanish dramatist David Planel, depicts us in the shop of one of Madrid's immigrant Moroccan community and dramatises the cross-generational tensions over cultural integration via a trackpot scheme to win a *You Have Been Framed* TV competition that involves re-shooting a faked version of a real-life biking accident.

Altogether more drily comic and directed with a droll, iconically paced stylism by Mary Peate, Christophe Pellet's *One More Wasted Year* is a wintry Gallic shrug of a play that takes a threesome of café-haunting twentysomethings on a journey into an indifference arguably worse, in its dull, echoing emptiness, than despair.

Around these two full stagings, a series of rehearsed readings has included a fascinating

have swallowed a whole row of dictionaries of up-to-the-minute "sart London" street-cred - a relentless register not, I suspect, intended by the original.

Rendered into agile, less attention-seeking English by John Clifford, Roxana Silbert's enjoyable staging of *Bazaar* illustrates the tricky problems of performance protocol. As the 55-year-old Moroccan shop-owner whose desperate desire to become an honorary Spaniard is questioned by his newly arrived, differently minded nephew, Nicholas Woodeson offers an object lesson in how to evoke the accent and gestures of a member of a disadvantaged cultural minority in a way that is alive to the undignified tragedy of the man's position but which also brings out the underlying human dignity. What a great Shylock he would make.

With Adrian Edmondson as the white-trash Spaniard who gets increasingly injured faking the accident, things go slightly astray. He produces riffs of extremely funny acting, but you can't help feeling that his Spanish counterpart would



glimpse of how French theatre responded to the aimlessness of the 1980s in Xavier Durringer's *A Desire to Kill on the Tip of the Tongue*, a play that focuses on a group of discontents outside a discotheque who are set further at odds by the professional wind-up merchant in their midst.

Using British actors, translators and directors, the whole season is a fascinating exercise in finding, for a home audience, equivalencies (where they exist) of idiom, acting, production style and cultural context. The successes and failures are revealing. To my ear, Mark Ravenhill's version swamped the very fine Durringer piece: the characters all sound as if they

have more of a false macho front than Edmondson, whose squinty-eyed, runty stage persona is about as high on testosterone as Stan Laurel. The character is weak but surely not as transparently so as here.

The most successful piece is *One More Wasted Year*, which boasts a wonderful performance from the lanky, charismatic Paul Bettany. He has a quality of Edmondson's sidekick, Rik Mayall, about him but a range that can extend to tragic desolation. The experience of watching this beautifully nuanced staging is like being fed a slither of *tarte au citron* in progressively more poison-spiked instalments.

Paul Taylor

Who says that still waters run deep?

Ocean
Belfast Festival

Poignantly billed as Merce Cunningham's last collaboration with John Cage, this large, peculiar, part-aleatory artefact (whose first staging, in 1994, Cage did not live to see) was developed from a set of "starting conditions" laid down by the composer before his death: the title, 90-minute duration and in-the-round floor plan (with the audience ringed by the orchestra), and a soundtrack of Cage's ideas, developed and finished by Andrew Culver.

Big as it is (15 dancers, 112 musicians), *Ocean* looks a little swamped in the vast Waterfront Hall, the circular dance floor, overhung by gargantuan lighting gantries, looking rather remote from the terraces. Even had this not been so, the slow elaborations and overlapping phrases of Cunningham's choreography (created with the aid of a computer program called *Lifeforms*) has a dreamy, abstract, even minimalist hue, almost ambient in the way it unfolds.

This sense was heavily reinforced by Cage's music. Perched in small hunches in the farthest flung nooks and crannies of the hall, the orchestra (made up of local students) had to cope with "32,067 musical events" - sequences of short pieces played asynchronously without either score or conductor. The result, if half randomised, is far from cacophonous. Instead, it resolves into a diffuse and not altogether discordant drone, punctuated by the odd barp of a horn or timpani crash, and overlaid with the sometimes low-sounding comments of David Tudor's electronically

treated undersea noises and whale moans. It's all pitched at a kind of atmospheric, suspenseful expectancy - although, after 20 minutes, you realise you're getting nowhere fast.

Against this rhythmically formless backdrop, the dancers work to their own interior clocks. Clad in body suits that accentuate the gauzy overhead lighting, they introduce themselves in overlapping solos and duets with long phrases of movement broken by held poses, often pirouetting and wheeling around the circular stage, before draining off the floor down the four exit pathways.

Somewhere between Martha Graham and Tai Chi, there is far more elegance than emotion to the choreography. Even in the duets, the dancers are ultimately immersed in their own worlds. The overall picture only really kicks in after an hour with the big group displays, each dancer starting his or her phrase a couple of beats behind the last, serving up eye-dazzling shoals of complex movement.

Given *Ocean*'s largely eventless evolution, it helps to get your metabolic rate right down: if you're at all anxious, the clock-counter, displayed on an array of video monitors, is maddeningly unhelpful. That said, I was astonished at the warmth of the crowd's response. And when the septuagenarian Cunningham hobbled on, looking small and footsore on his arthritic ankles, they showered him with whoops of appreciation. It seemed he couldn't get off the stage after that: an utter tramp for the limelight, milking it with give-it-to-me flaps of his huge hands.

Last performance, 7.45pm Waterfront Hall (01232-334400)

Mic Moroney

THE WEEK IN THE ARTS

DAVID LISTER

A week is a long time in museum politics. What started as a well-orchestrated campaign for free admissions by all the great and the good lost its united front yesterday. Alan Borg, director of the V & A, broke ranks, saying that he and the heads of other charging museums would not tolerate extra money being given to the free museums to keep them free and no help being given to the charging museums. He had, after all, only introduced charging out of dire necessity and would keep his museum free if he could.

Could this be the same Alan Borg who told the recent Museum of Modern Art and Galleries Commission conference: "Every survey shows that most museum visitors come from the ABC1 social categories. Free admission subsidises the well-off and tourists."

Apparently it is the same chap. But only apparently. Other museum directors I asked claimed they could only vaguely remember Dr Borg uttering those words and assured me they had to be "contextualised". Why the apparent change in philosophy and communal amnesia?

The violinist formerly known as Nigel was introduced simply as Kennedy when he played the El-

gar concerto at the Virgin Megastore in London. Actually Kennedy has never been a great one for first names. When I first met him, he called me Monster throughout our chat, something I still worry about in the small hours. His change of name is suspiciously well timed, publicity-wise, for his new recording. It's just a pity he couldn't persuade



the conductor on the recording, Sir Simon Rattle, to join him in ditching first names and titles. Rattle and Kennedy. It does have a certain musical machismo. Simon and Nigel, on the other hand, is rather less hutch.

More revealing is the fact that

K - to give Nige a more Kafkaesque title, and one he might consider adopting for his next CD - chose to perform Elgar at the Virgin Megastore, with a full 80-piece band squeezed into the basement of the Oxford street shop. But there's method in K's mould-breaking. The 500-strong audience were surrounded by shelves of discs and plenty of willing salespeople. Some 200 CDs were sold as the concert ended. That's over 10 per cent of the total needed to break into the classical Top 10, all in a few minutes. This was, I suspect, the first of many record-store concerts.

Culture secretary Chris Smith's proposal that the ENO leave the London Coliseum and share Covent Garden is highlighting the genuine affection people feel for the company. At the end of one of this week's performances of Verdi's *Falstaff*, a magical production by Matthew Warchus, music director Paul Daniel worked out that 15 out of the 17 performances ENO had played since Smith made his announcement had attracted audiences too large to fit into any other London theatre. Sometimes statistics can provide the most eloquent argument of all.

THE WEEK ON RADIO

ROBERT HANKS

Auntie Beeb's in a radio daze

If the BBC was a person, it would have severely strained shoulder-muscles from the amount of time it spends patting itself on the back. You probably thought you'd seen the end of the splurge of self-congratulation that accompanied the Corporation's 75th anniversary, but this week alone, Radio 2 has offered *From the Editor's Postbag* on Sunday, an hour-long selection of letters to the *Radio Times* with humorous links by Barry Took, and, on Wednesday, the first instalment of *Auntie's Family Album*, in which minor celebrities (Bill Oddie, for heaven's sake) select favourite BBC moments.

Listening to these was an extremely irritating experience, not so much because of anything they contained (Bill Oddie apart) but because the whole mood seems so out of key with the atmosphere at the BBC. Just the title of *Auntie's Family Album* sends the teeth on edge: why don't they call it "Please, please, love us, we're ever such a nice, cuddly broadcasting corporation and not at all a soulless bureaucracy that has lost touch with

its raison d'être" and have done with it? Apart from the fact that the billing would take up too much space in the *Radio Times*. At the moment, doom and gloom hang about the doors to Broadcasting House like a couple of psychotic night-club bouncers. Radio 4 producers have recently heard the results of this autumn's "selling round" - the first time they have had to "sell" programme ideas to the new commissioning editors (who are, you recall, each responsible for a different time of day). Under the new structure, several producers, including some of the BBC's most distinguished names, have sold no programmes at all; the fact that the bad news is now spread by e-mail hasn't increased their sense of the corporation's cuddliness.

Horror stories abound: one producer is supposed to have proposed a feature on Rimbaud and got back the answer "Who's Rimbaud?" Kate Rowland, head of drama, is rumoured to have been told by one of the new editors that he would never have commissioned *Spoonface Steinberg* - probably the most popu-

lar radio drama in the last quarter of a century - but "some things slip through the net". The best story I've heard has Producer A approaching Producer B: A was supposed to be travelling with Andy Kershaw to some war zone, but his editor was worried the project was dangerous, and he wanted B's advice. B said he didn't think anybody was likely to get killed; and A said, "No, you don't understand: the editor is worried that Kershaw might be dangerous - he thinks he's a bad influence."

Kershaw certainly does his damndest. He turned last week's *Pick of the Week* (Fri/Sun, R4) into an hour-long snipe at the BBC's management - for axing *The Afternoon Shift*, for unbawling Mark Radcliffe out of the Radio 1 breakfast slot, for ignoring the virtues of the World Service (a much better 24-hour news channel than the one they've just set up), for spending hundreds of thousands of pounds on a logo redesign any 11-year-old could have done in 10 minutes on his PC. I don't always admire Kershaw's taste, but his courage is admirable.

Spencer

Spencer... the source... of course... But certainly... something... that is the...

150 من الراجل

Spencer is back – but this time no applause

Somebody called it 'the divorce of the decade' which is, of course, wrong. His sister and brother-in-law hold that title. But certainly it is compelling, combining modern miseries and old-fashioned aristocratic fecklessness. Perhaps, says Glenda Cooper, that is the Spencers' lot.

There is no real contest for bad man of the week. Earl Spencer is that man. The details of the divorce case being played out in South African court are epic. The numbers alone are startling: it is alleged that he had 12 affairs in five months. He is said to be worth £100m and was attempting to fob off Victoria, his wife of five years, with £300,000. What he is alleged to have done and said to her is as shocking as it is riveting.

Yet it is less than three months since Charles Edward Maurice, the Right Honourable ninth Earl Spencer, was hailed as a sort of national hero; on the day of his sister's funeral, an occasion which he did not allow his wife to attend, his tribute was so moving and so perfectly captured the mood of the country. In it he attacked the Royal Family in scarcely veiled fashion and lambasted the press in round terms. Among the striking things about this week is the press's relish at his discomfiture and his remarkable insensitivity to his wife problems, including the same eating disorders that afflicted Diana.

How could a man who could articulate the grief and anger many felt at Diana's death so accurately, be so stupid that he could tell his wife at a particularly vulnerable time that he had never really loved her or tell such dreadful jokes about sticking with her through thick and thin – "she was thin and certainly thick".

The divorce case has, of course, made tremendous viewing. His wife turned up with one of his former mistresses Chantal Collopy on the first day of the hearing. ("He's the sort of man who makes women unite against him," said another former flame Sally-Ann Lasson).

Then the countess alleged that he had had slept with 10 or 12 women in the five months she spent at the exclusive Farm Place Clinic in Surrey, where she was treated for drink problems and anorexia nervosa.

Her lawyer added that Earl Spencer told his wife their marriage was over as he lay in the bath, saying "he didn't love her any more and she was no good as a wife". In a letter sent to his "paramour" Mrs Collopy, (reproduced opposite) the Earl described himself as "vicious, cruel and a bully" towards Victoria.

Not that the Earl's side let his wife have it his own way. The Countess could not have the £3.75m she demanded because she wouldn't be able to cope with it, said the Earl's lawyer. Leslie Weinkove told the judge: "There is a question mark over her ability to manage such an award, given that she has a 12-step approach to life dealing with each problem day to day." (a reference to the "Twelve Step" programme of self-help addiction recovery).

Then at the end of the fourth day of the couple's divorce hearing, David Horton-Fawkes, the manager of Lord Spencer's Althorp estate in Northamptonshire, spoke out on behalf of his friend saying Countess Spencer had been persuaded to launch a "malicious" campaign against her husband in the hope of financial gain.

"Far from claiming he was brutal, she lovingly and touchingly thanked him for his tolerance and support," he said.

Part of this obsession with his divorce has been our fascination that the rich – especially the aristocratic rich – are different. When Lady Spencer's lawyer expresses horror at only being offered £300,000 for a house and says she would only be able to "get a house in a very unattractive distant suburb with problems, perhaps, of crime", the rest of us roll our eyes.

But mainly Earl Spencer had set himself up for it. He took on the press so nakedly at the time of his sister's death – he called his sister "the most hunted person of the modern age", accused editors of having blood on their hands and concluded "my own and only explanation is that genuine goodness is threatening to those at the opposite end of the moral spectrum". The media, cowed by the flak they took at the time of Diana's death, had been skewered by the Earl more than anyone else. This week was payback time.

How can a man intelligent enough to construct the tribute at Diana's funeral be stupid enough to try to get a gagging order to stop the press reporting the divorce hearings. And how was it that a man who could sum up Diana so accurately – childlike, insecure and helping others as a way of improving her self-esteem – could be so cruel to his own wife?

Part of this at least lies in his own upbringing. The nation may feel that they have been unfortunate in having the dysfunctional Windsors as the Royal Family. But we should think ourselves lucky we didn't get the Spencers.

Charles the youngest Spencer was only four when his mother Frances Shand Kydd left home. He developed a fear of the dark and would cry: "I want my Mummy. I want my Mummy."

His father Johnny had bullied Frances and had forced her to take gynaecological tests when she did not produce the all-important heir. Charles was the fifth child of the marriage – an earlier son had died.

During the divorce Johnny made no attempt to hide from his children, the



Brotherly love: Earl Spencer reading the tributes to Diana at her resting place at Althorp in Northamptonshire Photograph: David Jones

acrimony between himself and Frances and fought tooth and nail to get custody of the children whom he then left to be brought up by nannies and au pairs. When he married for a second time to the then Raine Dartmouth (who Charles had met and disliked), he left it to Charles's headmaster at Eton to tell him that they had married.

Add to the casual cruelty that he had seen his father display to his mother, Charles was also brought up as heir – not only an earldom but a house and 8,500-acre Northamptonshire estate. Anachronistic as it may sound he was part of something that had been in his family for generations. Hostility to "acid Raine", as he and Diana named their stepmother, was due in part to her selling off family heirlooms.

Like her mother-in-law before her, Victoria Spencer produced children at a rapid rate – four children in four years until the birth of Louis, Viscount Althorp

made the dynasty secure.

Is it any wonder that Charles Spencer seems to have no idea how to behave to women? And yet he is not entirely insensitive either. His wife's lawyers said that in a letter he had admitted being callous, vicious and a bully to Victoria; the full text revealed something more self-aware. He had actually written: "I feel a dreadful bully to Victoria. I've been callous and vicious, trying to force her out of my life. She deserves better than that – a good man, who will love her, give her security and help her deal with her shortcomings."

Writing of his parents he added: "If I can't learn from their mistakes by avoiding divorce, I can at least prevent the unpleasantness that accompanied it."

It would be wrong simply to demonise the Earl. Like Diana he has been squashed into a mould he doesn't fit

His tribute to Diana was masterful and his attack on the Royal Family exact: his references to "blood family", his insinuation that for the first time Diana had found joy in her private life, her eating disorders brought on during her marriage. The Prince of Wales stood accused.

Yet Charles Windsor appears to have treated his wife less cruelly than Charles Spencer. He did not quibble over the divorce, he brought on his own mistress discreet. His bad press came in part from an orchestrated campaign against him; Charles Spencer, one feels, has brought a lot of troubles on himself.

But then the Earl has been sketched in bold lines. He has been a cartoon character to the press right from the very beginning. Within a month of reaching Magdalen College, Oxford (where he got a 2:1 in history), one contemporary remembers he had already made the pages of the university newspaper *Cherwell* as part of his exploits with the dining club the Bullingdon, who had smashed up a restaurant in Thame. He and his dicey friends have made regular appearances in newspapers since.

But it would be wrong simply to demonise the Earl. Like Diana he has been squashed into a mould he doesn't fit. He is a man of some intelligence who has at times behaved like a completely stupid and insensitive pillock.

Like most of us he is inconsistent and sometimes stupid. He certainly has the capacity to surprise us. He has done it twice in three months.

The Earl as poet and pundit: the tribute at Diana's funeral

I stand before you today, the representative of a family in grief, in a country in mourning, before a world in shock. We are all united, not only in our desire to pay our respects to Diana but rather in our need to do so.

For such was her extraordinary appeal that the tens of millions of people taking part in this service all over the world, via television and radio, who never actually met her, feel that they, too, lost someone close to them.

Without your God-given sensitivity, we would be immersed in greater ignorance at the anguish of Aids and HIV sufferers, the plight of the homeless, the isolation of lepers, the random destruction of landmines. Diana explained to me once that it was her innermost feelings of suffering that made it possible for her to connect with her constituency of the rejected.

And here we come to another truth about her. For all the status, the glamour, the applause, Diana remained throughout a very insecure person at heart, almost childlike in her desire to do good for others so she could release herself from deep feelings of unworthiness, of which her eating disorders were merely a symptom.

The world sensed this part of her character and cherished her for her vulnerability, while admiring her for her honesty.

She would want us today to pledge ourselves to protecting her beloved boys William and Harry from a similar fate, and I do this here, Diana, on your behalf. We will not allow them to suffer the anguish that used regularly to drive you to tearful despair. And, beyond that, on behalf of your mother and sisters, I pledge that we, your blood family, will do all we can to continue the imaginative way in which you were steering these two exceptional young men, so that their souls are not simply immersed by duty and tradition but can sing openly, as you planned.

We ... like you, recognise the need for them to experience as many different aspects of life as possible to arm them spiritually and emotionally for the years ahead.

The Earl as a selfish sensualist: his love letter to Chantal

Do I want to spend the rest of my life with you? Yes. When I was with you, everything is so clear.

You've been wonderfully patient with me and as for sensible – well, you couldn't have been more wise and considerate. For someone who's screwed up a major part of his life by charging into something he feared and didn't understand – marriage – your control ... has prevented me repeating my error.

I feel sorry for Victoria, for Don and for all six children involved. I never intended to put my children through the hell of a divorce, but I hope these divorces will be more civilised than that of my parents ...

I feel a dreadful bully to Victoria. I've been callous and vicious, trying to force her out of my life. She deserves better than that – a good man, who will love her, give her security and help her deal with her shortcomings ...

It is a time of turmoil, but the potential for happiness is there and neither of us is happy at present.

Deep down, I've always known my marriage was a mismatch, a terrible error, an impulsive whim that I compounded by adding more and more children to my family. There have been good times, but the bad ones have been chillingly awful. I'm not sure whether Victoria can remember them all, but I can, and I never want to go through such desperate lows again.

Part of the problem has been having an immature wife, one who is incapable of dealing with a husband with a strong character, except by going on hunger strike, an alcohol binge, or resorting to drugs. The other side of the problem is that I cannot deal with a woman who does these things to herself and I can't respect such negative reactions and therefore found my love drifting away. There wasn't an abundance of it in the first place.

THE EARL'S WOMEN



The Earl's wife Victoria (centre) and his mistresses Sally-Ann Lasson (left) and Chantal Collopy, to whom he revealed the truth of his marriage

Yes, save the planet, but spare us these latterday bah humbugs



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In certain primitive societies, there is an annual festival around the time of the winter solstice. The people fear that, unless they spend lots and lots of money in shopping temples, they will close, never to open again. They would then, according to ancient myth, be condemned to exist in darkness, unable to take part in the life-giving ritual of buying unnecessary plastic objects (which will be paid for in the afterlife). They believe that, at this time of year, they must crowd together in these shopping temples and engage in traditional rituals known as browsing, just-looking and searching for things without knowing what they are looking for. The people fear that unless they find suitable offerings to make to the other members of their tribe, consumerism as they know it will collapse, and the gods of their religion will be angry.

Thus most of the ceremonies are conducted in a trance-like state of anxiety and exhaustion, after which entire societies come to a halt for 12 days of rest, recuperation and over-eating.

Welcome, then, to No Shopping Day, a heresy as yet subject to contempt and ridicule, but which is destined to overthrow the ancient superstitions. It is not as if anyone enjoys the orgy of commercialism and

consumption: it is just that no one can even conceive of stopping it.

The country divides into those who on becoming aware of the onset of December (that's Monday, for those who have been busy) feel a chill of terror in the pit of their stomach, and those who know they have already ticked cousin Brian off their list. At one extreme end of the spectrum are the true phobics, mostly male, who have been known to return from six hours of "shopping" empty-handed apart from a book which they bought for themselves.

They are capable of doing this on Christmas Eve in the morning and having to return to the temples in the evening (which of course is the best possible time as they are almost deserted). At the other extreme are the super-rationalists, mostly female, who drew up a list in October and have already ordered everything from a catalogue. The rest of us muddle through the middle, a list of half-thoughts on a scrap of paper in one hand and a vague recollection that the average child receives £75-worth of presents at the back of the mind.

Of course, it is possible to restrain the arms-race of Christmas spending through mutual non-aggression pacts between



adults, although the negotiations could be more delicate than any Start Treaty.

But it is the children who make any de-escalation really difficult. The television advertising has been running for weeks and the anticipation is already rising. Hardened tiny cynics who give every appearance of

testing Jack Straw's under-10s curfew to the limit reveal a touching faith in the corporeal reality of Santa's sleigh, loaded with its improbable cargo.

The only thing that can make the shopping treadmill bearable for many is the mental picture of happy, smiling primary-school-age faces.

That, and the prospect of having a go on the Scalextric or computer game, can inure adults to walking around endless shops with that detestable modern catchphrase, "shop until you drop", echoing in our minds.

We may not like the commercialism, but who can say that they have never gained some pleasure from buying presents?

This is where the green case starts to become confused. Charles Secrett, the earnest director of Friends of the Earth, tried to sound jolly on the radio yesterday, saying No Shopping Day was supposed to be "fun".

Well, it didn't sound fun, it sounded tall-tall puritanical. The "No Shop", a Friends of the Earth stunt, is a tempting window design advertising all manner of "special offers". But the space inside contains images of empty shelves, a "No Sales Assistant" and a cash register. Visitors re-

ceive a shopping bag and a receipt which thanks them for "Not Shopping at No Shop". The aim is said to be "to get the message across that going on an orgy of shopping is not going to save precious resources". This is the kind of vomit-inducing moralising that gives greens a bad name.

Yes, most people buy more than they need. Our lifestyles are not sustainable. But Christmas shopping, for children at least, is the fun bit. It is just the mechanics that can be so tiresome. Let's do all the boring green things like put in energy-saving lightbulbs and give up the car, but let the children have a few large boxes of non-renewable plastics on the one big day of the year.

The important difficulty is how to get the boxes home and stashed in hidden places without hitting the out-of-town Toys R Us and putting the loot in the boot of the Volvo.

What we need is a green home delivery service, so that presents can be requested by mail order and delivered under conditions of great secrecy in the middle of the night. Preferably by air, using an environmentally friendly mode of transport. By a big friendly bloke with a beard and red coat.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Museum charges

Sir: There is no statistical evidence whatsoever to prove that visitor numbers to our museums decreased after charging was introduced. In fact figures quoted in David Lister's article "Museum's which charge lose a third of visitors" (27 November) are fictitious.

Before charging was introduced, without an electronic ticketing system, there was simply no accurate way of counting visitors. Visitor numbers were grossly over-estimated, un-audited and often "best guesses".

We are not advocating charging for museums per se, but all museums are expensive to run and none of them has been properly funded by government for years. However, we believe that charging for admission does not stop people from visiting museums. The report of recent research commissioned by the Museums and Galleries Commission (the Government's advisers on museum policy) said that "any reported impacts of charges on visitor numbers are of questionable reliability".

Only 4 per cent of those questioned in this research who did not visit museums cited admission charges as the deterring factor. Moreover, a clear majority expects to contribute to museums' finances according to use, and lack of time to visit museums is a much greater constraint than an admission charge. Whatever the Government's decision it must provide adequate funding for all national museums and galleries, instead of subjecting them to the miserable cheese-paring of the last decade. If charging were abolished, and the revenues not completely compensated by government, the results would be disastrous. No more effective way of denying access to the public could be imagined.

Dr NEIL CHALMERS
Director, The Natural History Museum

ROBERT CRAWFORD
Director, Imperial War Museum
JOHN FREEBORN
Deputy Director, The Royal Air Force Museum
RICHARD ORMOND
Director, The National Maritime Museum
London SW7

Care after school

Sir: There is a huge emphasis on after-school care for the single parent. Our club in Milton Keynes operates as a parent co-operative. Children from "two-parent families" are equally welcome, as they also benefit from after-school play and communal activities.

Quite rightly there are grave concerns over provision of suitably trained staff. Over the past three years I have had great difficulty in attracting applicants of the right calibre. The UK undervalues the role of the playworker. Whilst we welcome any training initiative from the Government, I hope it won't deteriorate into a way of keeping young people occupied and off the unemployment register while they find something better.



A dinosaur skeleton overlooks the turnstiles at the Natural History Museum

Photograph: John Voss

I hope that due concern is given to accommodation. Your article "Harman's after school care dream boled by lack of staff" (27 November) refers to clubs running in "schools, community centres, youth clubs and church halls". In the brave new world of Milton Keynes, our schools are modern and do not lend themselves to multiple use of the facilities. Open-plan classrooms are impossible to share for both educational and play purposes.

MARILYN MOFFAT

Chair, Management Committee

Heronsgate After School Project

Milton Keynes

Buckinghamshire

Sir: Everyone involved in lobbying for better child care will welcome the Government's £300m investment in a national childcare programme (report, 26 November). But if the plans are to work, they must be built on the foundations that are already in place.

In the UK, the majority of child care for the under-eights - including before- and after-school care - is provided by registered childminders working in their own homes. These carers are the backbone of Britain's childcare economy. They are particularly important for lone parents, who value the individual attention and continuity of care childminders can offer.

While an expansion of after-school clubs is to be welcomed, all parents have the right to choose the best type of care for their children, and my association will be lobbying hard for a part of the new investment to be targeted at the expansion, training and support of registered childminders so that parental choice and children's welfare stay at the top of the political agenda.

GILL HAYNES

National Childminding Association

Bromley, Kent

Sir: Mothers who wish to stay at home should be paid to look after their pre-school children.

Carmen Fielding's article "Why working life is not always a bed of roses" (27 November) is realistic and poignant. I am also a working mother; however, I have five children, and with each one have experienced different periods of maternity leave, culminating most recently in a year.

The decision by Harriet Harman to invest millions of pounds in child care encourages the view that the separation of a child from its parents is not only natural but desirable. The result will be even more mothers forced through poverty to work in order to pay someone else to look after their young children.

For those mothers who wish to stay at home this amounts to an inefficient distribution of child care, to say nothing of the effects on their children of impoverished parenting.

CAROLYN BUTLER

London SW5

Sir: I am a single parent from the "not so deserving" category outlined by Lynne Reid Banks (letter, 27 November). Thankfully I am in work, and supporting myself and my son. Unemployment is unfortunately a possibility for us all. Does Lynne Reid Banks object to her taxes supporting more traditional families when unemployed?

I am more than happy for my taxes to go on supporting women or men struggling to bring up their families.

CAROLINE BUCKNALL

London N4

Post letters to Letters to the Editor

and include a daytime telephone number.

Fax: 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk

E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address.

Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Deer hunters

Sir: William Petrie (Letters, 27 November) is wrong to imply that hunting deer with hounds imposes the same stress that they suffer when preyed on by wolves. Wolves hunt by ambushing their prey, and a deer's muscles are geared towards short sprints to escape this kind of attack. Deer are ill-adapted to long chases; hence the muscle damage and other indications of stress and severe exhaustion detailed in the Bateson Report.

Where deer populations need to be controlled, the least stressful options are shooting by a trained marksman, or immuno-contraception - a technique used successfully in the US for the past eight years but given precious little attention in this country.

NIGEL GOODWIN
School of Biology
University of Nottingham

Sir: All field sportsmen and women regard their sport as a wildlife conservation measure. Where hunting is banned and the sporting value to the community of red deer is thereby destroyed, the animals are reduced to the status of vermin.

Yet *The Independent* chooses to see the resulting slaughter as "a propaganda exercise" ("Bloody Revenge for stag hunt ban", 25 November).

Beast for beast, red deer destroy more crops than domestic stock do. They eat, trample and lie on large acreages of growing crops of hay and corn.

West Country farmers are not agriturbans. Without the hunt to move on the deer, the damage becomes more lo-

calised and concentrated. They can hardly be blamed for protecting their crops, and incidentally harvesting legally the stock which they have barbed and fed, before the poachers from the towns get them. The lucrative venison market attracts armed and violent men: remove the sporting incentive and local people will not risk violence on dark nights in unwarmed wildlife protection.

O H F GUILLEBAUD

Cheltenham,

Gloucestershire

Public lives

Sir: David Aaronovitch ("The right not to be known", 26 November) takes his argument for personal privacy too far.

If celebrities, such as Michael Hutchence and Paula Yates, systematically titillate their tabloid and television public with details of their private lives, it is neither surprising nor unreasonable that their chosen public should exhibit a prurient interest in the circumstances of an untimely death.

The case of Earl Spencer and reports of his divorce process is different. This man took the occasion of the memorial service for his sister, Diana, with a huge global audience, not only to castigate the media whose attentions she had so assiduously encouraged, but also to affirm the dutiful dedication of her "blood family", with thinly-veiled criticism of the Royal Family's treatment of her. He fuelled the then prevailing popular hysteria.

I am not an admirer of the House of Windsor. I do, however, despise humbug, and I consider the Spencer story entirely legitimate "public interest". It is proper that his treatment of his wife and family be available for comparison.

M J KNIGHT

Langley,

Berkshire

Everest politics

Sir: I fully agree with Ed Douglas's opposition to the Chinese occupation of Tibet ("Everest climbers urged to join Tibet boycott", 26 November). It is also grossly unfair that most of the money spent by expeditions to climb Everest goes into government coffers rather than to the local communities, whether that be in Nepal or Tibet.

However, calling for a boycott of the mountain will remove a major source of income from the Sherpa villages that supply porters to climbing expeditions, thus damaging these communities. While some commercial expeditions do exploit these people, there are companies which don't: co-operatives which pay them fairly.

An example of climbers helping these remote regions is the Himalayan Trust, created by Edmund Hillary, which has helped to build schools and medical centres and to rebuild the Thyangboche monastery after a fire in 1989.

Most of the climbers I know are not complacent about the Tibet issue and do oppose the Chinese occupation. Boycotting the mountain will not make the Chinese leave, but may well cut off a valuable source of income for the local peoples and stop one of the groups best placed to publicise the effects of the invasion from doing so.

PETE JOHNSON

Cambridge

Causes of anorexia

Sir: Whilst applauding Dr Dee Dawson for the sentiments expressed in her speech to the Girls' Schools Association ("Let children eat crisps, says doctor", 28 November), I feel that by concentrating on the nutritional needs of children she is diverting attention from the main issue regarding the onset of eating disorders.

We need to look further than an apparent desire to emulate supermodels or a striving for physical fitness. Eating disorders are more commonly caused by the sufferers' own perceived lack of ability to measure up to the stringent expectations set by our highly competitive society, of achieving high academic standards and a successful career, and all this with apparent ease. In these days of school league tables, teachers must be alert to the needs of these sensitive and perfectionist pupils who frequently are an asset to their schools but at great cost to themselves.

Since food is the means by which life is sustained, its denial can be a resignation from the pressures of life itself.

PENELOPE BAILY
Newmarket House Clinic
Norwich

Sticky issue

Sir: Is the glue on stamps and envelopes made from animal carcasses? I've stopped eating burgers but don't know whether to lay off correspondence as well.

JASON GATHORNE-HARDY

London SW3

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Please do not eat the newspaper. Most striking letter of the week wins in from Upper Poptleton from David McMillan, who explains that he was woken in the night by the whining of his dog, a two-year-old lurcher bitch and went to investigate: "I could hardly believe my eyes. Her normally skeletal thin features had ballooned enormously, so much so that she could not open her eyes; she looked like a Staffordshire Bull Terrier after serious dental work."

It was entirely caused, according to Mr McMillan's vet, "by her having chewed a tiny corner of yesterday's *Independent*" even though she had chewed the paper earlier in the year "to no ill effect". He asks whether there is some horrible new constituent in the ink and suggests we warn readers with dogs and children: "Meanwhile, I'll try to ensure that it's just me who devours your otherwise-excellent newspaper."

Well, I've investigated. The people at both our print sites, in Oldham and Watford, say there's been no change in the ink they have used for - well, decades. It's the usual mixture of pigs' blood, old motorway tar, Stout, bottled phlegm and minced bin-liners that it's always been. Nothing wrong there. Nutritious, even.

Seriously, though, the ink hasn't changed and isn't toxic. It is apparently a mineral, oil-based substance, with carbon floating in it and, as one of the Oldham managers pointed out, "My lads would go mad if there was anything dangerous in it; we breathe and eat the damned stuff all the time." Yet: you owe that man a refund.

My advice would nevertheless be not to eat the paper, at least not regularly. The habit is probably widespread. Our esteemed political columnist, "Don" Macintyre, is famous in the

trade for his habit of unconsciously consuming paper as an aid to moral speculation. He once ate an entire typewritten story, in the days before computerised newsrooms, without noticing, and on one occasion is said to have caused an argument in a restaurant about the bill, having absent-mindedly devoured a five-pound note lying on the table. Anyway, as newspapers go, *The Independent* is pretty toothsome - the flavour is slightly nutty, with a whiff of mushroom. But for addicts, a tip: much the same effect can be found by keeping packets of Bath Oliver biscuits open for a couple of weeks.

One of the tasks of this paper's editor has been to regularly infuriate a vocal section of the readership. One of the benefits of reading *The Independent* is, I like to think, the invigorating effect of experiencing occasional but extreme spasms of rage at breakfast, thus flushing out the toxins and giving the heart a bit of timely exercise. On the foxhunting issue we have clearly surpassed ourselves. I have had almost equally angry letters from pro-hunt and pro-fox readers.

Why are we not on the side of the righteous? Why don't we stand up for minorities? This has not been a debate which allows much space for subtlety. But here, yet again, is our position. We dislike hunting. *The Independent* is not staffed by Jor-locks-like chaps with purple faces and a good seat. But at the same time we are a mildly libertarian paper and don't approve of it being banned or criminalised by the Government. We want it to die away because of the actions of landowners and a change in fashion. How, some of you ask, is it possible to be against something and also against banning it? Oh Voltaire, we need you back.

Andrew Marr

QUOTE UNQUOTE

During the later years of this Parliament, I will be one of many MPs getting help with my fuel bills. Thank you, kind Chancellor, but the bribe is not generous enough to buy my vote - Kenneth Clarke, former chancellor, whose wife will be 60 three years from now

Unless this rocket man comes down in price, we will be taking a walk down the yellow brick road on this one - Andrew Giamolla, publisher's spokesman, on claims that Elton John's manager is seeking £8m for his life story

I simply cannot believe that all those letters I have received pleading for the fox are written by people who understand that they are advocating, in practice, a means of killing which is slower, more painful, less certain than hunting - Michael Heseltine, who opposes the anti-hunting Bill

Prozac is the drug of choice for glum PC sentimentalists unable to face the spiritual deficiencies at the heart of their own decaying liberalism - Camille Paglia, US feminist icon

I will not be the last Tory MP to fall for a pretty woman and so it is no use party activists telling MPs to do up their trousers - Piers Merchant, ex-Conservative MP

I am not a womaniser - Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer

23/COMMENT

A sure-fire cure for fouling dogs – and fouler commuters



DAVID
AARONOVITCH
ZERO TOLERANCE

The woman solicitor from Cleveland was clearly shocked. Policing in her area, she told the reporter from the *Today* programme, had become far too tough. Under the zero tolerance regime of Detective Chief Inspector Ray Mallon (I think he's a DCI. Or is that what Helen Mirren was?) constables cracking down on minor felonies had taken to interpreting their orders a little too literally. And yes, she could give plenty of horrifying examples. "One man," she wailed uncomprehendingly, "was CS-sprayed for urinating in the street."

And – along I suspect with a million others – my first reaction was "good". I was glad that this chap urinating in the street had been sprayed. In fact my only worry was that the punishment failed to fit the disgusting crime. It would have been more appropriate had the entire Cleveland police force gone round to this man's flat and relieved themselves on his stair carpet and stereo. But still, a good CS spraying was a start.

I mean it. Readers may recall the incident when a south London car breaker – a verminous wretch if ever there was one – smashed his way into a parked Sierra, and was promptly shot by the IRA gunman who, by unlucky coincidence, had been sleeping on the back seat surrounded by blankets, Semtex and Brownings. For one moment many of us saw the attractions of summary justice, and wondered whether we couldn't find alternative employment for the odd volunteer when the Troubles finally came to an end. A couple of shootings, and the cars in your street would be safe for a generation. On second thoughts, maybe not.

Actually, the micturating Northeasterner is only one of the many types of minor miscreants that I am happy to see given a taste of Belfast Aftermath. I have had some small successes with the local oon-scooping dog-walkers, springing out at dawn on the least tough-looking of them and asking why they don't get their animals to do that (pointing) in front of their own houses. They bluster and claim they were completely unaware of their pooches' actions

(whereas, in truth, they plan the defecation like a military operation), but they do not return.

Now – this victory behind me – I wish to wage war on another front. First, before I reveal my target, it is important that we agree about the salience of all this. Put simply, the more we tolerate impolite, anti-social and abusive behaviour, the worse it will get. It is true that modern society throws up all kinds of situations where the etiquette is not quite clear or has yet to develop. That's why there are so many arguments about where and when one can politely use a mobile phone or have one's pager go off.

But it is also true that there are many circumstances where we know perfectly well what the rules are, or ought to be, but where they are being broken with increasing impunity. And it is this that represents a slide away from considerate and polite behaviour, towards rude and ultimately criminal conduct.

So what is my new target? Well, I do not like people who either fail to hold heavy doors open for those behind them, or who fail to thank those who open doors for them. They must wait, however. For the fastest growing incivility that I see around me is those people who put their feet up on the seats of trains.

Now, when I was a teenager, with long hair, a combat jacket with "Yanks Out of Vietnam" written on it in Magic Marker and a rebellious attitude, I would not have dreamed of resting my desert boots on the seat opposite. Quite prepared to risk cointox interrupted, anxious to try cunilingus (and able to spell it), happy to smoke the occasional joint and to hurl abuse at the American embassy in Grosvenor Square, I drew the line at placing my dirty shoes somewhere that my fellow citizen would have to sit. And, even if I hadn't, a guard or a stolid member of the working classes would soon have put me right.

What a falling off there has been since then! Last week, when travelling on the London Underground, I discovered that the seat upon which I wished to rest was already occupied by the muddy platforms of a pudgy young woman with frizzy hair and a pre-emptive scowl. I waved vaguely at her legs with my furred copy of *The Independent* – at which, giving me a look of complete contempt and uttering a seismic sigh, she slid her shoes slowly down from the upholstery. At that moment I wanted nothing more than that Ray Mallon should get on the train and psittit, zap her right in the kisser.

The terrible thing is, that if this young lady cannot see why she is wrong in this instance, she is also unlikely to worry about littering the streets, standing up for the infirm and pregnant, observing no smoking signs and singing Spice Girl numbers at the top of her tuneless voice at midnight outside the houses of decent couples with three children.

I am familiar with the usual arguments against taking stern action. But would the world really be such a boring place, so staid and unexciting, if we were to banish – with just an aerosol blast or two – some of the most selfish and unacceptable behaviour in our society? Is it really so colourful and cheerful to live in streets awash with wee and to sit on seats covered in crud? Psittit!

Greedy Americans and nice, wet Europeans – the politics of weather



NICHOLAS
SCHOON
THE KYOTO
SUMMIT

How will the Kyoto Climate Summit, which starts on Monday, play in most of the British media and across Europe? Well, something like this. The greedy, selfish US, with its air-conditioners and big cars and isolationist, right-wing politicians, refuses to stop guzzling fossil fuels and insists on remaining the world's biggest climate-polluter – out of short-term self-interest. But the enlightened European Union holds out to the last minute, insisting that all the wealthy countries make a big cut in their greenhouse gas emissions. In the end there is some weak and disappointing compromise that does little to save the world from flood, drought and searing heat.

It isn't an unreasonable portrayal. But once you start to peer into the murky big picture behind this summit, you may find the American position a little more understandable.

Considered on a time-scale of thousands of years, the Earth's climate fluctuates naturally, wildly – and dangerously. The last ice age ended but 10,000 years ago. The next one may be round the corner. Our Western world has been built in a few hundred years of mild, pretty stable climate. We ought to be grateful for this and leave it well alone; instead we have started interfering by raising the level of heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere.

Unfortunately, the best of our scientists can give us only vague ideas about how quickly those changes will proceed and what they will be. At least another 10 years will pass before they can tell, with any certainty, what climate change will mean for most nations over a 20-to-100-year time-scale.

That makes negotiations on how to tackle the problem immensely complicated. It can only be solved collectively, with countries finding some agreement on how to share out the sacrifices that have to be made.



But how can a government agree to take action that may cost money and votes back at home, when it does not know what it stands to lose if there is no action?

Furthermore, climate change cannot be "stopped" in any normal sense of the word. It has already begun, and if we immediately did everything we could to fix it, such as stopping all consumption of fossil fuels overnight, it would still keep on changing deep into the next century – albeit more and more slowly.

In any case, calling such an immediate halt is out of the question, for our economies and standard of living are addicted to gas, oil and coal and can be only slowly weaned off them. As we turn our way through the vast quantities of remaining fossil fuel reserves well beyond the millennium, we are committing our Earth to centuries of further climate changes and increasing danger. This is an issue not just for the next century but for the deep future – we need to think about it not just in terms of children

and grandchildren, but on the same time-scale as those who built medieval cathedrals. For it is in this distant future, beyond 2100, when the ice caps of Antarctica and Greenland will slip into the sea and raise its level by hundreds of feet – unless we start turning the supertanker now.

The goal of the Kyoto delegates should be to slow down the rate of change to a level that our most vulnerable systems – farming, forestry, low-lying islands, water resources – can cope with, and eventually stabilise the climate.

We have only a dim idea of what is tolerable, and where the balance lies between the costs of acting now and the costs of climate damage – or coping with it – in future. But it seems certain that achieving this goal means making deep, global cuts in the next few decades in the emissions of climate-changing gases, principally carbon dioxide, which comes mainly from burning fossil fuels. Yet our consumption of these fuels is rising steadily, in line with population and econ-

omic growth, at around 2 per cent a year.

We certainly can cut fossil fuel consumption, especially in the developed world. After all, we use it extremely wastefully because it is so abundant and cheap, and there are alternatives. But making these changes is certain to be painful for governments – they will have to upset powerful industrial lobbies, raise the cost of fuel, risk the wrath of voters. They are being asked to take all this pain with no precise knowledge of what the gain is; what exactly is in it for individual nations. The information is unavailable.

That is the main reason why these negotiations are so difficult and so stalled. The European Union's solution is to say that the developed nations must lead the way with a simple, decisive action – they must all cut their emissions by 15 per cent by 2010 compared to their 1990 level. That would make a real start on tackling the

threat, and it will also show the Third World – whose emissions are rising rapidly, and will soon overtake the West's – that the rich countries are serious. It is a bold, moral stance, but somewhat compromised by the fact that under this proposal some of the poorer EU countries will be allowed to raise their emissions drastically – by more than 30 per cent. Other, wealthier countries, such as Britain and Germany, will offset this by making even deeper cuts.

All the other developed countries are willing to give far less. Australia, whose economy is particularly reliant on heavy fossil fuel use, insists that it must be allowed to raise its fossil fuel emissions by 18 per cent. The US advocates stabilising annual emissions between 1990 and 2010. It also insists that big, fast-industrialising developing countries such as India and China will have to make some sort of commitment in Kyoto to restrain their fast rising emissions.

And here's another huge problem in these negotiations. The bad guys, us in the West who have caused the great bulk of climate change so far, hold nearly all the cards. It looks as though we will suffer the least as the climate changes, because our wealth and technology put us in a fairly strong position to cope with rising sea levels and changes in temperature and rainfall. Poor, densely populated nations will be far more at risk, yet they have little negotiating strength. As the climate summit opens, the Third World is divided and confused about the issue. If they refuse to discuss controlling their emissions, and there is no agreement and no controls, then they will be the biggest losers. It is extremely unfair.

We have had less than 10 years of international negotiations over climate change, and a century or more of them lies ahead. This climate diplomacy will make the protracted superpower negotiations over nuclear weapons and the endless Gatt world trade talks look quick and easy in comparison. Kyoto is just the beginning of the beginning. The most important thing of all is to make any agreement legally binding and enforceable – if there is no progress on that, the planet really is in trouble.

So the big picture peddled by the press is half right. America looks pretty ugly. But Europe's grand idea of a simple, moral gesture offers no lasting solution.

Private education: how we can have our cake and eat it



TREVOR
PHILLIPS
LABOUR'S
EGALITARIANISM

Just for a moment there, I thought the middle classes were going to get away with it. The dinner parties were that Blair's meo were realistic. They would not interfere with the comforts that make up for the stresses of pursuing a professional career.

Of course, they could be as "inclusive" as hell; but our private pleasures would be immune from invasion by rough sorts. Improve the national health service by all means; but privately-insured appendices would still be taken out in one of those nice BUPA facilities. Support the arts, but "access" would not mean yobs at the opera; and as for education – well, a few extra billion go to state schools, but what we pay for keeps its character.

Labour's shadow ministers made the right noises before the election, and since May they have stood by the rights of the affluent – and sometimes not-so-affluent – to pay for those little extras which make life more comfortable.

It's the sort of message that makes the professional's heart sing as he picks up his *Independent* (or some other, nameless, broadsheet) in the village near his weekend cottage. It's also a message that causes Labour activists to do unBlair-like things, such as giving Ken Livingstone's political career the kiss of life. The word "betrayal" still comes easily to the lips of the Labour rank-and-file.

But there is a sting in the New Labour tail – if they can hold their nerve (tobacco and foxes are not good omens). In recent days the Government has turned out two of its principal charm-merchants to tell Labour's traditional class enemies how safe they are; this is the equivalent of the football club chairman's vote of confidence in the manager. It is blindingly obvious that inside the velvet glove the steel fist is flexing itself.

Those who abandoned the Blue Team on 1 May, assuming that all the nasty redistributive nonsense had been knocked out of Labour by that nice Mr Blair, had better think again: socialism was never just about money. Today the vogue word is "inclusion"; it may not mean more taxes for the affluent, but if it means what I think it means, there are many who would happily part with some extra dosh rather than be inclusive.

The first signs came from the arts. There was rejoicing when the poetry-reading, intellectual Friend of Tony, Chris Smith, got the Ministry of Culture gig. Mr Smith has lived up to his reputation as a man who knows his arts from his elbow, with positive announcements and appearances on screen, in print and in the theatre. But his determination to let ordinary folk enjoy the delights of grand opera is clearly making some uneasy. The management of Covent Garden are faced with

rumblings amongst backers, who wonder why they should pay large amounts of money to mix with *hot polloi*. They want everyone to enjoy opera; but that's not the same as saying that "their" Covent Garden should be the People's Opera. Smith is right, of course, and they are wrong; but it is their money which allows the Opera House to do much of what it does. Will they enjoy rubbing shoulders with people who think of opera as football theme music? They are now face to face with the true meaning of "inclusion"; you can have what you like, but you may have to share some of it with people you don't like. In the next few months we will begin to see just how "new" some of Labour's rich new friends really are.

Even more sticky is the question of what to do about independent, fee-paying schools. Most of them are day schools; many of them used to be in the state sector. Relatively few are of the great historic boarding school stamp.

Let me declare an interest: my own children, by dint of hard work and talent, qualified for entry to one of the five most successful schools in the country. It used to be the grammar school in my area when I was a child; it is now independent. I knew, at the age of 11, that its pupils were different; when my school met them in *Top of the Form*, having given us a sound thrashing they gave

us three "burrahs", whilst we shouted "honray". But they've changed. Now they too say "honray"; they play sports against local schools; and this is probably the most genuinely multicultural school I've seen in this country (and I've filmed in dozens over the years). It would have been perverse to have turned down the chance for my own children to benefit from what the school has to offer, purely because money is involved. And in London we are not unusual; the crisis in our capital's schools is now so extreme that one-sixth of parents choose to pay for education even if they can scarcely afford it. All the independent schools are hugely oversubscribed. It's not surprising, when you are told that local state schools cannot guarantee uninterrupted schooling, that five GCSEs is regarded as an outstanding performance, and that the school can't afford set texts. Though there are no available statistics, the anecdotal evidence suggests that desire for what independent schools offer is strongest amongst those who regard themselves as most disadvantaged and excluded: the ethnic minorities.

Getting rid of the independents won't solve the problems of the state schools. And there is little or no proof that an injection of middle-class energy to a state school will lift results for all; it is just as likely that, as with most public services, the middle classes will

bully their way into soaking up a disproportionate share of publicly funded resources. But something clearly has to be done to avoid the growth of educational apartheid. That is why the speech by the Education Minister, Stephen Byers, to the conference of the Girls' Schools Association was so cunning. He was clear that killing the independent schools was off the agenda, thus comforting the people who pay; but he also made it clear with carrot and implied stick that they would have to share, or else the "leave-'em-alone" policy might have to be revised.

Suggestions that private hospitals facilities will also have to play their part in meeting the beds crisis in the NHS reinforce the suspicion that the public-private partnership which ministers talk about involves more than handing public resources to private shareholders.

Here, perhaps, is one of the building blocks of Blair's "third way". Those with money may well be allowed to retain the privileges that money can buy; but where these involve using public goods – land, culture, information, there's no exclusive lease. We middle classes may not pay extra taxes, but we are going to have to find ways of sharing our good fortune with everyone else; we can have our cake, and we can eat it – but we've had a clear warning that there will be owd diners at the table and that we shall have to provide for them.

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Barbara

Monique Serf (Barbara), singer and songwriter: born Paris 9 June 1930; died Paris (Neuilly) 25 November 1997.

She would start her first number sitting at a sinfully black grand piano. Arrayed all in black, with dead white face and hands, she attacked her first number, her left hand implacably hammering out the strange harmonies of the bass. Then a little-girl voice, barely audible, began to drift through the enigmatic lyric she had composed only for herself, and for her voice alone. For the second verse, accompanied by Lockwood's violin, she would rise from her lakeside of keys and it was like a wraith from *Giselle* lingering over her mystic tomb, Gothic, romantic.

Barbara possessed remarkable breath control, for her voice seemed to float on a minimum of the air required by mortal men, and her lips hardly moved. Unless one knew the text by heart, as all the fans did, it was often difficult to catch the words: one sometimes felt, as when listening to the relentless mutterings of Françoise Sagan, that one needed a decoder.

But Barbara had been trained at the Conservatoire de Paris, where she had won two prizes for classical singing, and she could also declaim her words with true dramatic force and vocal power, as at the end of certain songs, when she would throw up her left arm, contorting it like a boa constrictor, then flinging back her head to expose a defenceless throat above which a square jaw supported the tireless mask of her exhaustion.

Despite her excellent training, Barbara found it difficult to get work. Perhaps in that post-war period people were looking for someone to make them forget the dark past, not to remind them of sadness, loneliness, heartbreak and death. So she was practically unknown for 15 years, working in a murky Bris-

sels night-club before making obscure beginnings as *"La Chanteuse de Minuit"*. She stayed there five years (1958-63) singing Brasseur, Ferré, Brel, Ferrat, then the *fin-de-siècle* favourites whose sinister bournour suited her style.

One of the composers of that period had been British, the bilingual Harry Fragson, a great favourite of the café concert, who wrote some famous chansons including the immortal *"Reviens"*. Barbara was also attracted to the ditties of Léon Xanrof, who composed the equally immortal songs of Yvette Guilbert, *"Madame Arthur"* and *"Le Fiacre"*, as well as the more sentimental *"Réve de Valse"*, all neatly interpreted by Barbara, though Guilbert had been a *diseuse* rather than a *chanteuse*.

Barbara had begun trying her own hand at composition, and in 1963 gave a recital that revealed her to a much wider public, singing *"Dis, quand viendras-tu?"*, *"Chapeau bas"* and *"Le Temps du Lilas"*. She made her first appearances at the old Bobino and at that great shrine of the chanson (recently reopened after tactful refurbishing), the Olympia. She produced one of her most truly popular songs, *"Ma plus belle histoire d'amour, c'est vous"* which she would address at the end of every concert to a delirious audience, enraptured by the parting thought that they and only they were the ones she really loved. She was irresistible, and President François Mitterrand himself adopted her as his favourite singer; he would invite her to the Elysée dinners to sing for his guests and arranged for her to receive the grand reward of Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur.

Mitterrand was a moderate socialist, but Barbara had more extreme left-wing tendencies, which endeared her to the French Communist leader Georges Marchais and the Communist newspaper *L'Humanité*. Barbara often made appearances with Colette

Maguy, Jean Ferrat and other left-wing entertainers, and she supported campaigns for victims of Aids, of child slavery, racism, sexism, harsh immigration laws. The titles of her songs became more and more ominous, and often included the colour black which she called "a festival of colour".

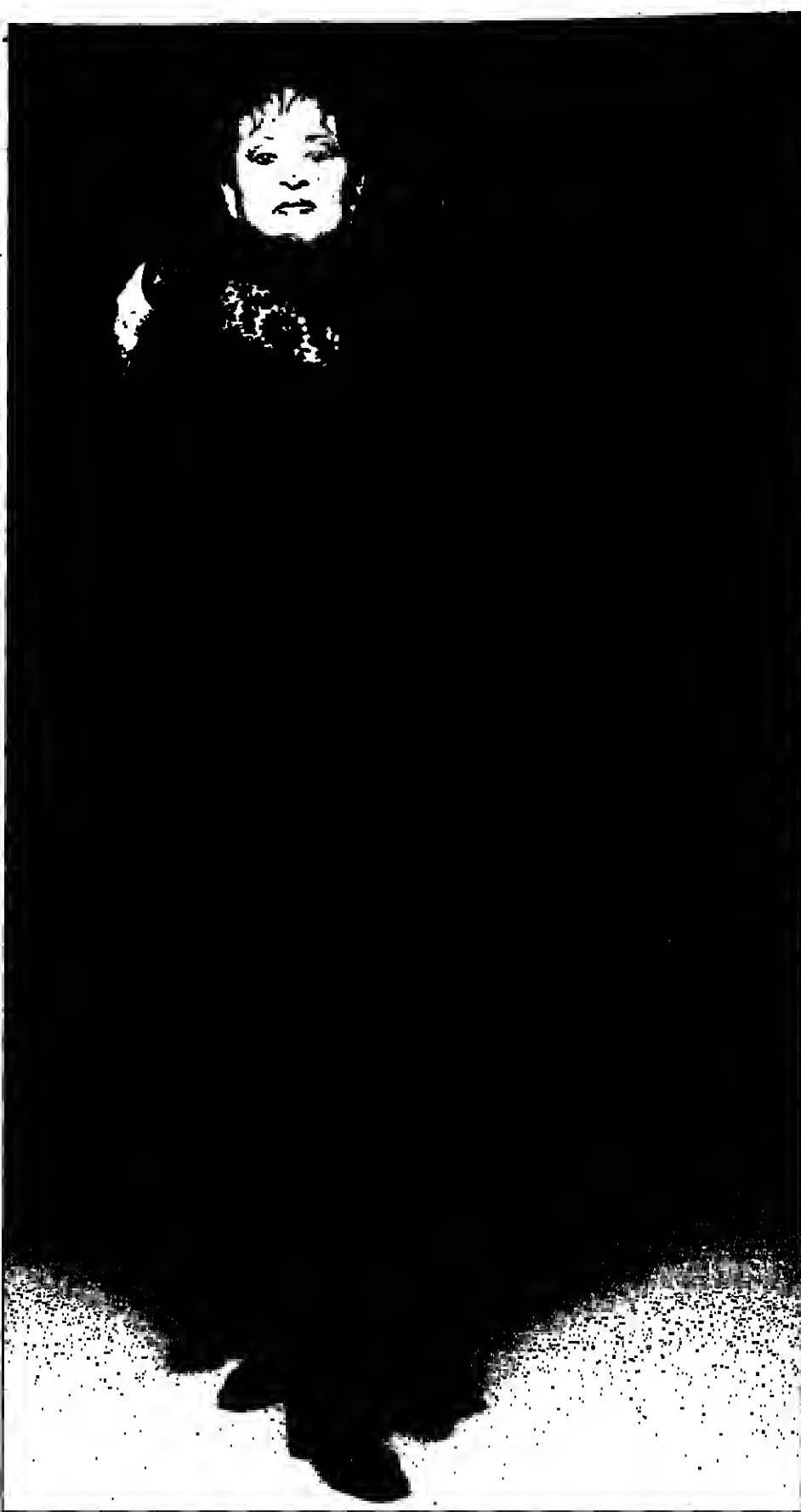
Dedicated fans discussed her tall, emaciated figure and well-cut robes, saying "Black suits her so well." She became known as *"La Dame en Noir"* and sang sombre chansons like *"La Dame brune"*, *"Le Mal de vivre"*, *"Les Amours incestueuses"*. Two of her songs, *"La Louve"* ("The She-Wolf") and *"L'Aigle Noir"* ("The Black Eagle"), fitted her own appearance on stage.

Photographed full face she often looked ambisexual, but in profile she became, with her hawk-like nose and bold jawline, heavily made-up eyes glittering in that chalk-white mask, like a black eagle or a prowling beast of prey. Her love affairs were unhappy (*"Mes Hommes"*) and the passions of a *ferme fatale* in despair were reflected in many dark hymns like *"Le Soleil noir"* ("Black Sun") inspired by Gérard de Nerval's sonnet *"El Desdichado"* ("The Ill-Fated"). My one star is dead - and my love's constellations bear the black sun of melancholia.

She slowly dropped out of sight, with only occasional returns to the stage - I saw her in 1987 at the Châtelet, her last full public appearance in Paris, all in black, the entire audience in tears after being cheered up a little by her *"Petit Bois de Saint-Amand"*, based on a classic Bach theme and interspersed with perky little quotes from a nursery rhyme. She was most heartbreaking when she tried to smile and be gay.

"La Grande Dame de la Chanson" has bequeathed to us a treasury of records and albums. Sales of her last album, *Barbara*, recorded in 1996 between bouts of asthma, are approaching one million.

- James Kirkup



'La Dame en Noir': Barbara in 1987

Photograph: B. Rheims / Sygma

Frank Mulville

Frank Nugent Blood Mulville, writer and yachtsman: born Dinard, France 1 January 1924; married first Mary Watson (one daughter; marriage dissolved), secondly Celia Foster (two sons; marriage dissolved), thirdly Wendy Slack; died Malden, Essex 3 November 1997.

Frank Mulville will be remembered as one of Britain's finest sea writers. His nine books are largely accounts of his own life and travels on salt water. His observations and fearless self-analysis raise them to the level of literature.

He was the youngest of seven children. His parents had met in Argentina but his early upbringing was in London, in Kensington. Family holidays in Brighton introduced him to the smacks and barges that proliferated along the Essex shores in those days. He eked out his childhood winters improving his understanding of sailing theory with models on the Round Pond in Kensington Gardens, and respect for traditional rigs and hull forms stayed with him all his life.

Times were hard for the Mulvilles during the Depression and in due course Frank found himself on a ship back to Argentina with his father. His book *North Star to Southern Cross* (1993), winner of the "Best Book of the Sea" award, recounts the agonies suffered by a susceptible foreign youth in a Spanish-speaking boarding school, contrasting them with periods of freedom on the pampas among the gauchos.

At the commencement of the Second World War, Mulville was back in London at St Paul's School, which he promptly left to apprentice himself to the Blue Star Line. In 1943, his ship was torpedoed and he organised a sailing rig for a lifeboat he shared with 45 survivors. Later in the war, he acquired *Ratty*, a sailing dinghy which he used as a tender for the tug aboard which he now served as an RNVR lieutenant.

He married for the first time soon after the war, but employment was hard to find. He tried window cleaning, journalism, selling pressure cookers, and founded a secretarial service which turned into a printing firm and is still in business. Two yachts followed, with voyages to Spain and Holland, but it was aboard his third boat, *Girl Stella*, a converted Looe fishing smack, that he made his name as a sailor.

A lifelong socialist and a member of the Labour Party, Mulville determined to discover the truth about early post-revolution Cuba for himself. He sailed across the Atlantic with his second wife, Celia, and their two sons, Patrick and Adrian. The writing that came out of this experience and a subsequent single-handed voyage to Cuba with his final boat *Iskra* (*In Grandma's Wake*, 1970, and *Dear Dolphin*, 1991) ranks among the most thought-provoking work of its kind. His description of life in a cane-cutting brigade, toiling with his comrades until they dropped in the dust and heat "for the Revolution" is particularly powerful. *Girl Stella* was lost in a traumatic shipwreck in the Azores.

It was at one of the lowest ebbs in the life of this creative man that he found the 30ft *Iskra*, a traditional wooden cutter built in 1930. Her workaday good looks appealed to his nonsense seaman and his easy relationship with her lasted for the remainder of his life. In her, he and Wendy, his third wife, sailed the Atlantic from the Arctic Circle to Buenos Aires. The stories of their many voyages run through his later books.

It is interesting to speculate how a man of Frank Mulville's curtailed formal education contrived to write with such sensitivity and technical skill. He himself had no doubts:

Just as the ocean wears away the rocks and bends the contour of the shore to its will, so it washes over a man's mind, smoothing the sharp edges, knocking off the conceits, flattening the prejudices so that he is left with a different instrument with which to govern his life.

- Tom Cunliffe

The Right Rev Hugh Gough

Hugh Rowlands Gough, priest: born 19 September 1905; ordained deacon 1928, priest 1929; OBE 1945; Vicar of Islington 1946-48; Prelate, St Paul's Cathedral 1948; Archdeacon of West Ham 1948-58; Suffragan Bishop of Barking 1948-59; Archbishop of Sydney (Metropolitan of New South Wales) 1958-66; Primate of Australia 1959-66; Chaplain and Sub-Prelate, Order of St John of Jerusalem 1959-72; CMG 1965; Rector of Freshford 1967-72; Vicar of Limpsie 1970-72; married 1929 The Hon Madeline Kinnaird (one daughter); died Over Wallop, Hampshire 13 November 1997.

Hugh Gough was the last bishop to come direct from England to a Metropolitan See in Australia. He was appointed Archbishop of Sydney in 1958 and left an enduring mark on the church he had come to serve.

Gough never ceased to be "pukka" English, but he felt in love with Australia as a country still rich in adventure and excitement. He and his wife arrived in Sydney in May 1959 and soon began to make their mark. His style of leadership was quite new where clergy were concerned; it took them by storm. They never came to know him, or be them, as intimately as his predecessor, Archbishop Morrell, but they liked his direct manner and clipped style of conversation.

Gough had no previous ex-

perience of church government through an annual synod and its standing committees and he never really adjusted to this democratic system. He moved his office from Church House to Bishopscourt, where he carried out routine administration and correspondence with the help of a domestic chaplain and personal assistant. But this made him more remote and less accessible for the ordinary clergyman.

He held a regular meeting of his bishops and archdeacons: this kept him informed about diocesan needs and problems. He delegated responsibility and willingly trusted colleagues to carry on at their own discretion - his most constructive decision was to appoint a commission to examine the structures and finances of the diocese.

Gough was too outspoken to escape media criticism. He was always prone to act first, and then reflect later. The *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph* treated him with dignity and respect, but he was subjected to a long and hostile campaign in the pages of the Anglican and in some secular publications such as *Nation*.

Hugh Gough came from a strong Evangelical background. He was born in 1905 in the then undivided continent of India, where his father was a Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionary on the North-West Frontier. School at Weymouth in Dorset led on to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he became President of the Cambridge Inter-collegiate Christian Union and took his degree

in 1927. After 12 months at the London College of Divinity, he was made deacon in 1928 and ordained to the priesthood in 1929. A curacy in Islington was followed by parish appointments at Bath, Bayswater and Carlisle. He served with distinction as an Army Chaplain and then, in 1946, became vicar of St Mary's, Islington, until 1948, when he was consecrated as Bishop of Barking in the diocese of Chelmsford.

He had been the first Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship, was closely associated with the Evangelical Alliance, often spoke at the Keswick Convention and was one of those who issued the invitation to Billy Graham for the Harringay Crusade of 1954.

No other bishop would identify himself with Billy Graham or support the Crusade until Archbishop Fisher took his seat on the platform for the final meeting. But Gough had taken his stand without regard of the cost in official favour; he was the rising hope of all evangelicals in the Fifties but his election as Archbishop of Sydney took him away from England.

He was elected to the Primacy of Australia by the Diocesan Bishops in October 1959 and he filled this role in a way that won well-deserved respect. The new Constitution for the Church in Australia came into effect on 1 January 1962 and it fell to Gough to preside over the first General Synod in May that year. As Primate he travelled widely in Australia, at-

tended the World Council of Churches General Assembly at New Delhi in 1961, and took part in the Anglican Congress at Toronto in 1963. He carried out visits to CMS in Pakistan in 1964 and to the Australian Armed Forces in Malaya and Vietnam in 1965.

But the nervous strain of seven strenuous years took their toll in a serious breakdown in health early in 1966 and he resigned from the See, just seven years after his enthronement. For a short time, he was vicar of the little parish of Freshford in the diocese of Bath and Wells; then he retired altogether and made his home first in Bath and then in the Hampshire village of Over Wallop.

Those who knew him well will never forget the warmth of



Gough: evangelical

his friendship or his courage in adversity. He had a high and adventurous spirit, coupled with a very humble loyalty and devotion. He kept in touch with Sydney visitors in his home and followed church life in Sydney with unfailing interest.

- M. L. Loane

FAITH & REASON

A cry in the dark from Muslim youth

Unnoticed by the media, an *intifada* has already begun on the streets of Britain, says Fud Nohdi, editor of the Muslim newspaper Q-News. To prevent its growth society must find a way of listening to the voice of young British Islam.

The launching of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) last week was an initiative forged by a community that, despite the odds, is showing signs of both growth and maturity. In one sense last Sunday's gathering was celebratory - nothing more than an assembly of the converted. But the powerful call it made for "Muslim unity" may prove of real significance.

The atmosphere at the MCB inaugural convention was part therapy, part euphoria. It was an opportunity for the mostly middle-aged men who are mosque- and institution-oriented to meet and hug each other again - part of an elaborate ritual of self-congratulation and self-assurance. But, within a community consisting of more than 56 nationalities, questions are always going to be asked about any group which sets itself up as either an

"umbrella body" or "a representative" organisation.

The idea of setting up a representative body for British Muslims has been tried before. In the mid-Seventies Dr Syed Pasha formed the Union of Muslim Organisations (UMO), a body largely of first-generation professionals interested in formulating links with the British government rather than in representing grass-roots Muslims in Britain. In the nineties the late Dr Kalim Siddiqui set up the Muslim Parliament, which despite its name was not an elected body and which consisted mostly of first-generation activists. The MCB has therefore set out to work as an independent body beholden to no one outside Britain, and its broad-based approach and emphasis on the promotion of Muslim "co-operation, consensus and unity" should make it more appealing to the second generation of British Muslims than its rivals.

Certainly there is a pressing need, felt by both Muslims and a substantial body of non-Muslims in the country, to give British Muslims an articulate, moderate and relevant voice. This need is perhaps best pondered in the light of what might happen if British Muslims continue to cry in the dark.

Recent reports, including one by the Policy Studies Institute, have provided

ample evidence of the deprivation and disenfranchisement faced by the Muslim community. Muslims, both men and women, face more prejudice and discrimination than any other community when it comes to employment and the provision of housing and health care services. Perhaps the most blatant of all institutional anti-Muslim discrimination in modern Britain is the denial of state funding for Muslim schools.

Islamophobia, as Professor Gordon Conway, chair of the Runnymede Trust report on the subject recently said, is a "real and growing phenomenon - an ugly word for an ugly reality". The pervasive hatred of Islam and Muslims across all sections of British society is a serious matter that needs to be tackled with urgency and solid commitment. Yet the Muslim community, caught in a vicious web of poverty and systemic disadvantage, is bewildered and in no position to deal with the multiple socioeconomic disadvantages affecting it.

Responsible imams, community leaders and activists cannot stop the tide of young people turning to criminality and extremism. Platoons of young angry Muslims are mushrooming all over the country. Twisted and disfigured by the twin evils of racism and Islamophobia, they are bitter and resentful - potential fifth-column guerrillas for the numerous

causes in the Muslim world. Idle hands and heads are also vulnerable to simplistic and demagogic slogans.

Though the media may not yet have noted the fact, the *intifada* in the inner cities of Britain has already begun: last summer young Muslim people were involved in at least 14 violent incidents with the authorities. "Shaping the future of Islam in Britain," Khalida Khan, a keynote speaker, told the MCB gathering, "depends very much on shaping individuals to become Muslims, in their faith and spirituality, ethics and morality, deeds, community life and most important of all, in their identity."

The building of a British Islam will have to be founded upon a new realisation - that in the UK Muslims cannot operate as if they are a majority; they have to rediscover a theology and Islamic jurisprudence suited to a minority living in a multi-faith and multi-cultural society. But they also need the help of the rest of society in combating Islamophobia, particularly at the point where it prevents Muslims and non-Muslims cooperating on the joint diagnosis and solution of major shared problems relating to urban poverty and deprivation. The alternative may be too frightening to contemplate.

- Faith & Reason is edited by Paul Valley

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3DL, telephoned to 071-231 2001 (24-hour answering machine 071-231-2002) or faxed to 071-239 2000, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). (Other Gazette announcements: notices, obituaries, funeral notices, marriages, marriages) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £6 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

The Independent's main switchboard number is 071-231 2000.

Appointments

Mr Dick Jenkins, to be ambassador to the Republic of Georgia.
Mr Michael Dobbins, to be High Commissioner to the Republic of Fiji.
Mr Christopher Peter Tootal, to be Chairman of the Copyright Tribunal.
Mr Stephen Price Richards, to be a Justice of the High Court assigned to the Queen's Bench Division.
Mr Nicholas Richard Purnifrey QC, to be a Justice of the High Court assigned to the Chancery Division.
Mr Hugh Bernard Harwood Carlisle QC, to be part-time President of the Transport Tribunal.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

TODAY: Princess Margaret, President of the Guide Association, attends the North East England Guide Association's 10th Anniversary Dinner. TOMORROW: The Duchess of Gloucester, Patron, Scottish Opera, attends a concert, at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh.

Changing of the Guard

TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am. TOMORROW: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am.

Birthdays

TODAY: Professor Sir Ivor Bachevalier, psychiatrist, 81; M Jacques Chirac, President of France, 65; Sir Derek Day, former High Commissioner in Canada, 70; Professor Sir Michael Howard, historian, 75; Mr Derek Jameson, radio presenter and former editor, 68; Professor Frank Kermode, literary critic, 78; Mr John Mayall, rhythm and blues musician, 67; Gertrude Jekyll, landscape architect, 1843; Carlo Levi, novelist, painter and journalist, 1902; Deshae Giovanni Bellini (Giambellini), painter, 1516; Thomas Wolsey, Cardinal and Lord Chancellor, 1530; Hans Holbein the Younger, painter, 1533; Giacomo Antonio Domenico Michele Secondo Maria Puccini, composer, 1924. On this day the Eighth Army opened its offensive, 1943. Today is the Feast Day of St Brendan of Birr, St Radbod, St Saturninus or Serenus of Toulouse and St Saturninus, martyr.

TOMORROW: Births: Andrea Paladino, (Andrea di Pietro della Gonnola) architect, 1508; Sir Philip Sidney, poet, soldier and courtier, 1554; John Buryan, writer, baptised, 1628; Jonathan Swift, author, 1667. Deaths: Oscar Fingal O'Flaherty Wills Wilde, playwright, 1900; Joyce Irene Grenfell, entertainer, 1979. On this day: the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, near London, was destroyed by fire, 1936. Today is the Feast Day of St Andrew the Apostle, St Cuthbert Mayne and St Sapor.

Lectures
TODAY: Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Symbolism in England (3): G.F. Watts", 3.30pm.
National Portrait Gallery: J.K.D. Cooper, "Sir John Vanbrugh and Nicholas Hawksmoor", 3pm.

Samsung delays second phase of £450m investment in English factory

Samsung, the biggest industrial conglomerate in South Korea, has postponed building the next phase of its £450m electronics investment in North-east England as Korean corporations scramble to pull back from overseas expansion in the face of a crippling financial crisis.

Richard Lloyd Parry in Seoul and Chris Godsmark in London report on Samsung's decision, which could cost some 2,000 jobs and further undermine confidence in the ability of Korean firms to deliver on their investment plans.

Senior Samsung executives in Korea yesterday said the British government was told more than five months ago that further investment at Wymondley Park, between Stockton and Hartlepool, was not viable. The group blamed the weakening business climate, as well as the declining credit of Korean companies with international lenders.

The project is the second phase of a two-part investment which was greeted as a "wonderful opportunity" by Michael Heseltine, then president of the Board of Trade, when it was announced in October 1994. Mr Heseltine said the project was "as significant as the early wave of large-scale Japanese investments" in the UK.

Samsung Europe said £130m had been spent on a training centre and on factories producing microwave ovens and colour monitors, which between them employ 900 people. The Korean giant also has a factory at nearby Billingham making television sets. But the centrepiece of the scheme, a plant making semiconductors, personal computers and fax machines and employing 2,000, has been postponed indefinitely.

Samsung executives in Korea said the additional investment would have been \$1.4bn (£875m), though a spokesman for the company's European operations insisted the whole site was estimated to cost £450m.

The group said the collapse in the value of the Korean won and a world-wide loss of trust in the creditworthiness of the country's firms after a wave of bankruptcies made it difficult to raise the money needed for the investment. Samsung has also been hit by a plunge in computer chip prices in a market plagued by worldwide overproduction.

"When we first proposed this, things looked very rosy," said Moon Dong Shik, Samsung's executive of globalisation. "All of a sudden came this oversupply. We could build the factory, but that would be a crazy decision. It would be very dishonest and we would deceive a lot of people by saying that we were going to invest that."

In theory, plans for the plant could be revived if the Korean economy improves and semiconductor prices go up. "If we made an investment of semiconductors in Europe it would always be in the UK," said Mr Moon. "But we don't have a very optimistic prospect for the next two or three years."

The Department of Trade and Industry last night confirmed it had been given advance warning of Samsung's deliberations. A spokesman said the DTI had been "kept informed that Samsung were reviewing their North-east project". But the spokesman said: "We have not received today's announcements from Samsung."

The spokesman said the DTI had not revealed the threat to the investment before now because to do so would have been "commercially confidential". Peter Man-

derson, the local MP and Minister Without Portfolio, was travelling abroad yesterday and could not be contacted for comment.

The news was greeted with surprise in Teesside, where the second phase of the investment was seen as the key to bringing in further Korean components makers. Already three other Korean firms have set up as suppliers to Samsung nearby.

Dave Wood from the Tees Valley Development Company, a council-backed organisation promoting inward investment, said: "I suppose it doesn't come as a total shock, given the drop in the world-wide semiconductor market. But it is surprising that they told the Government and the news did not get to us."

The scale of Government grants for the project has never been disclosed, though the aid package was structured in phases as the different stages of the investment were completed. Local authorities were offering a further £5m of grants to Samsung, provided the group gave permanent jobs to unemployed workers.

Mr Wood said the creation of a further 2,000 jobs was central to the drive to reduce unemployment in the Tees Valley, which stands at more than 9 per cent and almost double the national average.

Samsung's decision is even more surprising given that three days ago Cheong Shin, chief executive of Samsung Europe, issued a statement saying the conglomerate remained "fully committed" to all its overseas operations, including Wymondley Park. Two months ago Samsung further demonstrated its commitment by announcing another £5m investment at Wymondley Park to extend microwave production capacity. It has boosted production from an expected 740,000 this year to more than 1 million ovens in 1998.

One council official on Teesside said confusion surrounded the future of the project. "Our biggest problem is getting information out of Samsung. Relations are cordial, but they are peculiarly secretive. It's almost impossible to get anything out of them about their plans."

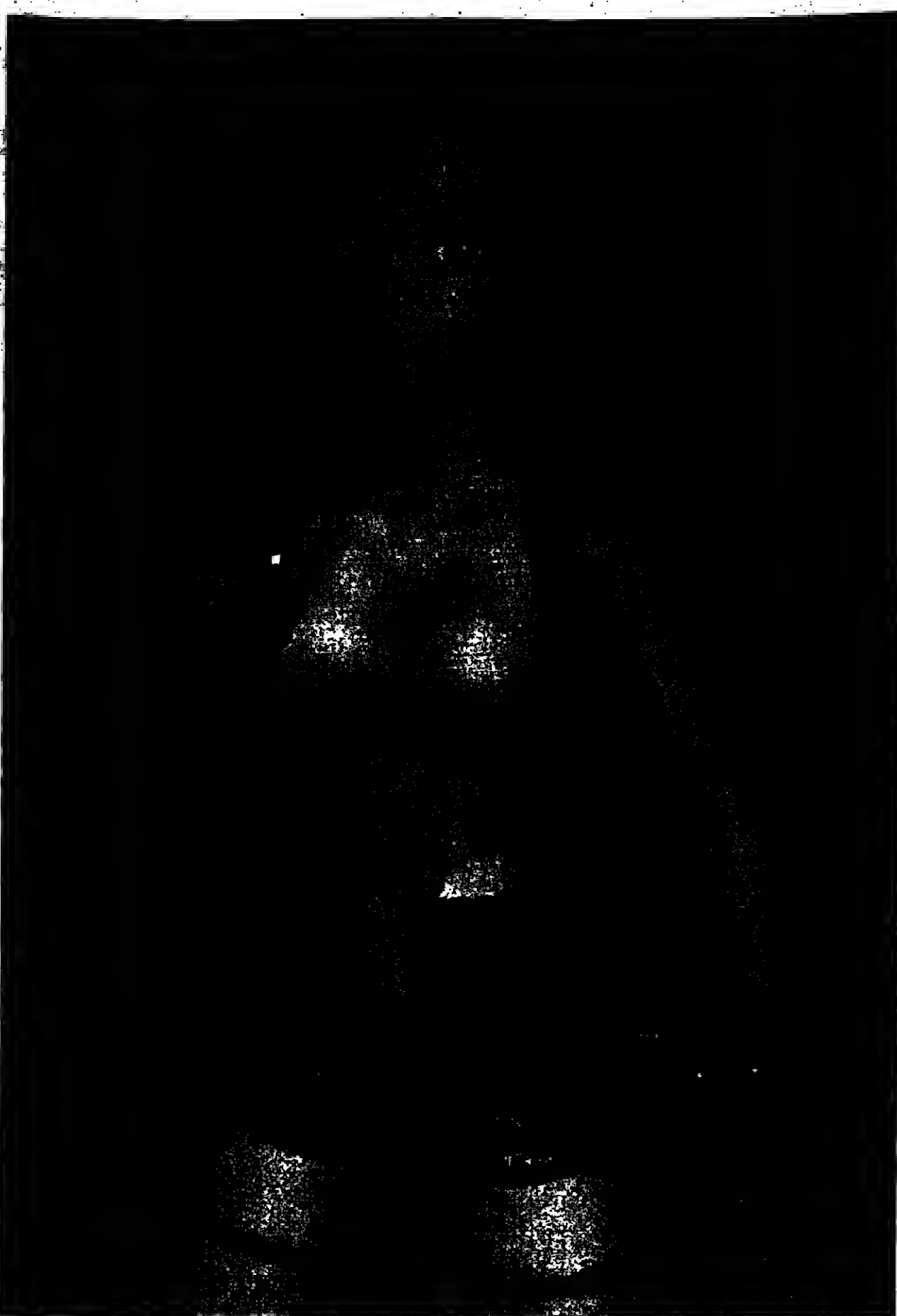
The comments follow Samsung's announcement last week of an unprecedented restructuring programme, involving a 30 per cent cut in investment, reductions in executive pay, the merging of departments and the sale or closure of unprofitable businesses.

"It's a matter of survival," said Hwang Young Key, senior managing director and chief of staff in Samsung's finance group yesterday. "The problem with corporate Korea overall is high growth based on high leverage. This formula worked successfully in the Sixties, Seventies and Eighties, but in the Nineties we should have realised earlier that it will not be able to deliver success in the 21st century."

Yesterday a spokesman for another conglomerate, Daewoo, said operations at the company's VCR factory in Antrim, Northern Ireland, would be reviewed as part of a world-wide assessment of company operations. Hyundai was also reported this week to have delayed investment in a £30m semiconductor plant in Dundermole, Scotland. Of the four big Korean conglomerates, only LG, which has a \$4.5bn project in South Wales, insists that its investments in Britain will not be affected.

Diplomats in Seoul are waiting nervously for the outcome of negotiations between the South Korean government and the IMF over the terms of the bail-out. On Thursday, the Korean finance minister, Lim Chang Yul, acknowledged that the \$20bn which Seoul initially requested would not be enough to cover short-term debts.

The spokesman said the DTI had not revealed the threat to the investment before now because to do so would have been "commercially confidential". Peter Man-



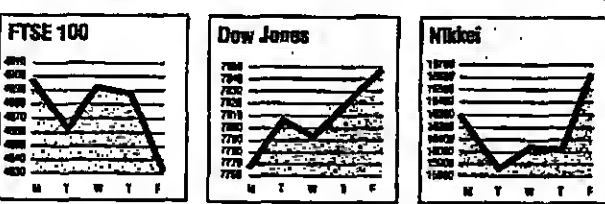
Indiana Jane: Lara Croft, star of Tomb Raider II, may have to dig Eidos out of financial trouble

Has Lara Croft at last passed her sell-by date?

Eidos, the computer software group, is relying on the success of the long-awaited sequel to its best-selling game, Tomb Raider, to dig itself out of financial trouble after announcing a £18.3m loss yesterday for the six months to September. Tomb Raider II, starring the wild child fictional character Lara Croft, was released in the UK yesterday, following its launch in the US last week. It already appears to be beating sales expectations. HMV and the Electronics Boutique in London opened their doors at midnight on Thursday to meet demand for the product. "This is going to be the Christmas number one. We've already sold 200 this morning. The queues for this are unbelievable," said Michael Young, an assistant at Oxford Street's Electronics Boutique. Eidos' shares fell 25p to 655p yesterday after "extremely disappointing" sales of two other computer games and a rise in losses from £12.5m last half. However, the group said it had orders for 1.5 million Tomb Raider II units world-wide. Analysts were yesterday expecting Tomb II sales in the first year to beat the original Tomb Raider's 2.5 million units and predicted the group would make £9m profit in the full year. Asked if Lara, like the Spice Girls, might be nearing her sell-by date, Charles Cornwall, Eidos' chief executive, replied stiffly: "Lara can't be talked about in the same sentence as the Spice Girls. She's a hip Indiana Jane." Meanwhile, Hornby, a rather more traditional toy company, is struggling to steam into the modern age. The maker of model railways and Scalextric racing cars said yesterday the strong pound had put the brakes on half-year profits, which fell from £1.1m to £973,000, but concentrating on the two core products would reap future benefits. Peter Newey, chairman, said: "It was too early to say how Christmas trading was going."

— Sameena Ahmad and John Wilcock

STOCK MARKETS



FTSE 100

Index	Close	Change	Change%	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield%
FTSE 100	4831.80	-57.20	-1.17	5387.30	3882.70	3.64
FTSE 250	4656.70	-1.60	-0.03	4963.80	4321.90	3.43
FTSE 350	2338.80	-22.40	-0.95	2570.50	1935.70	3.50
FTSE All Share	2286.64	-20.33	-0.88	2507.68	1942.22	3.58
FTSE SmallCap	2272.1	2.10	0.09	2407.40	2127.50	3.40
FTSE Premium	1240.1	2.20	0.18	1346.50	1198.70	3.40
FTSE AIM	967.5	-0.20	-0.02	1138.00	885.90	1.07
Dow Jones	7844.74	62.22	0.67	8296.03	6236.05	1.74
Nikkei	16538.28	33.08	0.20	21289.88	14968.13	0.93
Hong Kong	10526.62	-56.18	-0.53	16820.31	8775.88	4.03
Dax	3548.14	-4.70	-0.12	4456.99	2760.76	2.02

INTEREST RATES



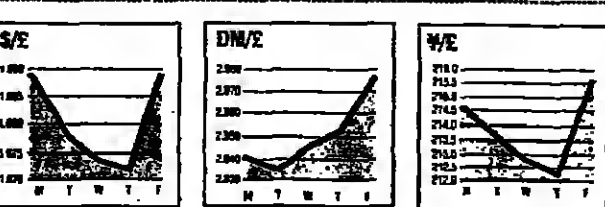
Money Market Rates

Index	3 month	1 yr	1 year	1 yr 1/2	2 yr	3 yr	5 yr	10 yr
UK	7.75	1.32	7.93	0.85	6.50	-0.54	6.29	-1.12
US	5.90	0.40	6.01	0.32	5.85	-0.19	6.04	-0.31
Japan	0.59	0.11	0.67	0.05	1.98	-0.26	2.92	-0.89
Germany	3.76	0.51	4.09	0.75	5.45	-0.30	6.04	-0.51

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Falls
California Invest	34.00
BS PLC	12.50
Lawrie PLC	3.90
Woodward PLC	11.50
Straightline Beach	34.00
Schroders PLC	1706.00
Glaxo Wellcome	1300
Guardian Royal	285

CURRENCIES



Pound

Index	10 day	1 month	3 month	6 month	1 year
Dollar	1.6892	+1.68c	1.6820	1.6820	1.6820
D-Mark	2.9791	+2.66c	2.9757	2.9757	2.9757
Yen	215.59	+19.22	191.65	191.65	191.65
£ Index	105.00	+0.90	94.00	94.00	94.00

OTHER INDICATORS

Index	10 day	1 month	3 month	6 month	1 year
Brent Oil (\$)	13.72	0.16	22.51	22.51	22.51
Gold (\$)	298.65	0.40	371.65	371.65	371.65
Silver (\$)	5.30	0.08	4.73	4.73	4.73
GDP	113.90	3.80	106.7	106.7	106.7
RPI	159.50	3.7	153.81	153.81	153.81
Basis Points	7.25	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00

www.bloomberg.com source: Bloomberg

Consumers benefit as computer hardware prices plummet

The cost of kitting yourself out with a powerful, multimedia computer is dropping almost as fast as Asian stock prices these days.

A year ago £1,000 would have bought a machine with half the working memory, half the hard disk size and something three times as slow as that cash would buy today. Prices of pentium II MMX computers - the type of bi-tech machine that takes 3-D graphics and high-quality sound in its stride - have dropped by 50 per cent in the last year.

A four-speed CD-Rom cost £100 in the summer. Today shoppers can pick up one that is six times as fast for half the price. And the best is yet to come for computer buffs prepared to hang on.

According to Phil Burnham of Romtec, which monitors trends and prices in the UK PC market, Intel the giant US computer chip company is planning to slash the price of Pentium II processors next January and again in April. For consumers, the precipitous decline in prices - the result of retailers winding down stocks in readiness for the latest technology and continuing overcapacity in the market for computer components and semiconductors - is obviously welcome news.

For those companies supplying components and selling computers, it means thinning margins and falling profits. Viglen, demerged from Amstrad, is the latest casualty. Just a month after announcing disappointing full-year figures, the

company warned yesterday that oversupply of computer components was forcing it to cut prices, hitting margins, though sales volumes were still rising. Shares in the company crashed almost one-third from 50p to 22.5p. The problem is industry-wide.

The UK computer group RM and the US group Gateway have all announced pricing pressures in the last few weeks. David Moore, marketing manager at Dell Computers, the number two direct-to-consumer supplier of computers in the UK agrees: "Everyone is competing on price. The market is incredibly aggressive. The only way for companies to win is keep costs low and sell high-quality products where prices are holding up."

— Sameena Ahmad

Mutuals turn up the heat on would-be carpetbaggers

Building societies yesterday called for stronger defences against carpetbaggers as they faced further attempts to force them convert to banks and distribute billions of pounds of reserves to members. As Andrew Veity reports, the societies fear continual carpetbagging will damage their business unless the rules are toughened.

Building societies yesterday called for stronger defences against carpetbaggers as they faced further attempts to force them convert to banks and distribute billions of pounds of reserves to members. As Andrew Veity reports, the societies fear continual carpetbagging will damage their business unless the rules are toughened.

Adrian Coles, director general of the BSA, yesterday said: "There is no way of stopping Mr Hardern, who came bottom of the poll in the Nationwide elections, from getting publicity and trying to get 50 signatures. It seems a ludicrously small number for a building society with millions of members."

He added: "It is actually going to be difficult to run a mutual society if every year you have fundamental problems like this. Elections could happen in 1998, 1999 and 2000. You couldn't run the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly on the basis of a referendum every year."

In the run-up to the Nationwide board elections in July, building societies began urging Helen Liddell,

economic secretary to the Treasury, to help defend their mutual status by toughening rules on elections to the board.

Mrs Liddell was asked to raise the required number of signatures on an election nomination from 50 to 350. She demurred, saying a change would make building society directors less accountable to the membership.

Kevin McGuinness, company secretary at the Bradford & Bingley, said accountability had been dealt with. "We already began last year to require directors to seek re-election. We want to see a more realistic number of members to be required to nominate someone for an election," he said.

Mr Hardern is understood to be running as a sole candidate and is asking for members to back his own decisions in nominating further candidates for election. Without a majority, it is unlikely that Members for Conversion could force Bradford & Bingley's board to propose a vote on conversion, which would be accompanied by windfall shares worth approximately £1,000 to every member.

BZW quits Japanese equities business

Barclays, the UK bank, is to close down its Japanese equities business after failing to find a suitable buyer, with the loss of around 100 jobs in Tokyo. Some staff covering Japanese sales desks in other Barclays' offices will also lose their jobs.

Martin Taylor, Barclays' chief executive, put large chunks of BZW, Barclays' investment banking arm, up for sale last month after the business failed to generate adequate returns. Mr Taylor originally intended to sell the business as a package, but was forced to adopt a piecemeal approach as potential purchasers dropped one by one out of the bidding race.

CSFB, eventually left as the sole bidder, bought the equities and corporate finance divisions earlier this month at a knockdown price. But the Swiss bank turned up its nose at Barclays' Asian and Australasian activities. The Japanese operation was dubbed "a loser" in a confidential video-conference for CSFB directors.

A spokesperson for Barclays said: "We have talked to number of potential purchasers (for the Japanese equities business) but were not able to come to a mutually satisfactory agreement."

The spokesperson denied that the decision was connected with recent turmoil in Far Eastern markets, saying: "We are happy with the

way the Japanese equities business has fared."

Following the closure of the equities business, Barclays will be left with around 450 staff in Japan, 300 in Barclays Capital and 150 in Barclays Global Investors, its asset management arm.

Another 18 staff in other offices, including London, have also lost their jobs. A Barclays' spokesperson would not discuss details of redundancy packages, but said that all employees had been offered "terms commensurate with their contracts".

The former Barclays' employees will be battling in an increasingly competitive labour market for new jobs. Yesterday, Peregrine Investment Holdings, the Hong Kong-based bank, announced it was cutting 275 jobs world-wide.

Barclays said yesterday that the disposal of its remaining Asian equities businesses as well as the wholesale disposal of its Australasian activities were unaffected by yesterday's news. Analysts have expressed doubts that Barclays will be able to sell its Asian equities businesses as a package, pointing to concerns about the profitability of some of the operations. The City is more upbeat, however, about prospects for the bank's Australasian businesses.

— Lea Peterson



**JEREMY
WARNER**
ON WHY
THE TAKEOVER
PANEL MAY
FIND IT
DIFFICULT TO
SURVIVE THE
GUINNESS
REPORT

Guinness assigns Panel to the dustbin of history

Everybody else seems to have emerged from the wreckage of the Guinness affair largely unscathed, so why not the poor old Takeover Panel too? The Panel doesn't get it in the neck quite as badly as Ernest Saunders in the Government's long awaited report on the affair published this week, but the inspectors do reserve some of their fiercest strictures for this remaining monument to the principles of self regulation in the City.

The Panel is already under attack from Brussels, which wants to harmonise takeover regulation throughout Europe on a statutory basis. Could it be that the Guinness report will prove the final nail in the Panel's coffin? The timing could hardly be worse. The Council of Ministers is due to review the Commission's proposed directive next Monday. The inspectors' findings don't exactly bolster the Panel's case for preserving Britain's unique system of non statutory takeover regulation.

To some respects the inspectors' conclusions about the Panel are unfair. No system of regulation, statutory or not, can ever be foolproof against those prepared to take the risk of breaking the rules and then lie about it. If there were such a system, we would live in a perfect world in which there would be no crime or immoral practice.

Even the Guinness inspectors, armed with the most intrusive and daunting

powers available in the jurisdiction, were confronted by non cooperation and lies on a massive scale, to the extent that eleven years after the event, they are forced to admit to not being able to get to the bottom of some matters.

All the same, the underlying premise behind the inspectors' criticism is a reasonable one - it is that all financial scandals are to a greater or lesser extent about a failure in regulation. If the responsible regulator is unable to prevent a scandal as momentous as the Guinness affair, then it is plainly culpable to some degree.

There were obvious signs in the years that preceded the Guinness affair of cavalier and questionable practice on a growing scale in the City. Before the fall, Roger Seelig, Guinness's merchant bank adviser, boasted in an interview that he didn't play by the rules, he made them.

His corporate finance colleague at Morgan Grenfell, George Magan, talked of using every available inch of the playing field to serving the perceived interests of clients. Even an organisation as apparently asleep at the wheel as the Panel could not have helped but notice the arrogance of these remarks and be warned by them that things were seriously out of control. The Panel should have done something, but it didn't.

Strangely, however, this is not the

main thrust of the criticism levelled at the Panel. Rather the inspectors concentrate on some specific failings in the Takeover Code and the manner in which the Panel dealt with the Distillers bid and its aftermath.

For instance, the inspectors observe that the absence of a specific ban on the use of indemnified purchases of shares made it at least possible to claim that this practice was not disallowed by the Code. The inspectors also criticise the way in which the Panel ordered Guinness to pay compensation to Distillers shareholders of £85m in the aftermath of the affair as "based on an unreal premise".

Further, the £85m together with the £54m Guinness paid to Argoll, the rival bidder, in settlement of litigation, would have been regarded by Mr Saunders and others as a reasonable additional expense to secure the prize of Distillers. In other words, the Panel allowed Guinness to get away with it. Despite having broken virtually every rule in the book, the distribution was tiny compared with the size of the reward.

"Once consummated, a takeover cannot realistically be reversed and the present case illustrates the difficulty of providing ex post facto justice for either a losing contestant or accepting shareholders", the inspectors remark in a statement of the blindingly obvious.

The report moves closer to the heart of the matter when it observes that the Panel's powers of investigation depended on a shared ethic of truthfulness which the inspectors found during the course of their investigation belonged at best to a bygone age. "In the face of a party prepared not only to break the rules in secret but then lie in response to the investigator's questions, the Panel executive was confronted by a task which its founders never contemplated."

Here again, however, the inspectors largely miss the point. The Takeover Panel is in fact as diligent and thorough a regulator as it is possible to find. Anyone who has dug into the archives, as I have, to discover how the Panel dealt on an hourly basis with the allegation and counter allegation that went on during the course of the Distillers takeover battle, cannot help but be impressed by the professionalism and thoroughness of its approach.

Unfortunately, this is not enough. An effective regulator also needs to hold a presumption of guilt, and its approach to the task in hand must be that of the crusader. Most important of all, it needs to be the outsider peering in. The Panel makes a valiant attempt at being these things, but because it is an organisation set up by takeover practitioners essen-

tially for the benefit of takeover practitioners, it cannot ever truly provide this function.

Like all forms of self regulation, the Panel's main purpose is to adjudicate between members of the club, not that of providing a wider public interest sanction. Its natural inclination is to trust its members' and it is bound to hold a strong presumption of innocence. This is what seems to have happened in the Guinness affair. Since then the Panel has considerably tightened up its procedures and it may well be that the awful omelette of the Guinness affair is sufficient deterrent in itself to the City's wilder flights of excess.

Don't count on it, though. As we approach the top of the cycle once more, the instances of questionable practice, both in takeover activity and elsewhere in the City, are again multiplying. When there's a fast buck to be made, there are always those prepared to bend the rules if they think they can get away with it. The uncomfortable truth is that the Panel's old fashioned combination of poacher and gamekeeper roles continues to make this endeavour that much easier. The lessons of the Guinness scandal are clear; takeover regulation, like other forms of City regulation, should be put on a full statutory footing.

Electricians reject 30% pay increase

The call for wage restraint by the Chancellor of the Exchequer seems to be falling on deaf ears. Barrie Clement, Labour Editor, discovers that electricians have turned down a massive pay rise.

Graphic evidence of growing inflationary pressure emerged yesterday with news that electricians in the construction industry have rejected a 30 per cent pay increase over three years. Nearly 24,000 electricians voted by three to two against the package despite advice to accept from the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union (AEEU).

Union officials have been sent back to the negotiating table in an attempt to secure a one-year agreement for a 7.5 per cent rise, more than double the inflation rate.

The vote against what will be seen by other employees as an extremely generous offer comes after a plea for wage restraint from the Chancellor in his Green Budget on Tuesday. Gor-

doo Brown urged both sides of industry to bear in mind that today's pay rises could mean tomorrow's job losses.

However, electricians believe they did relatively badly throughout the recession in the construction industry and are seeking to take advantage of increasing skill shortages.

Paul Corby, a national officer of the AEEU, said electricians in the construction industry were angry over an attempt by the Electrical Contractors' Association to create a new grade of semi-skilled electrician who they believe will take a substantial part of their work.

Mr Corby said a one-year deal granting electricians in the engineering sector a 6 per cent rise "without strings" had set a precedent. The deal on offer to his members would give them around 5.4 per cent over the first 12 months and include unacceptable conditions.

According to AEEU activists, the offer would have given their members 7 per cent in the second year and 6 per cent in the final part of the agreement. It is understood that it is highly unusual for electricians in the industry to reject a deal recommended by their

leadership. There is growing evidence that some union members are dissatisfied with the AEEU and that they are seeking a more militant line on pay.

Mr Corby said his members were seeking a deal which would give them pay of around £10 an hour on prestigious sites such as the Millennium Dome, the Jubilee Line and the Royal Opera House.

A spokesman for the employers pointed out that negotiators on both sides had agreed the package before it was put out to ballot. The employers, however, are not taking any attention to the union's calls.

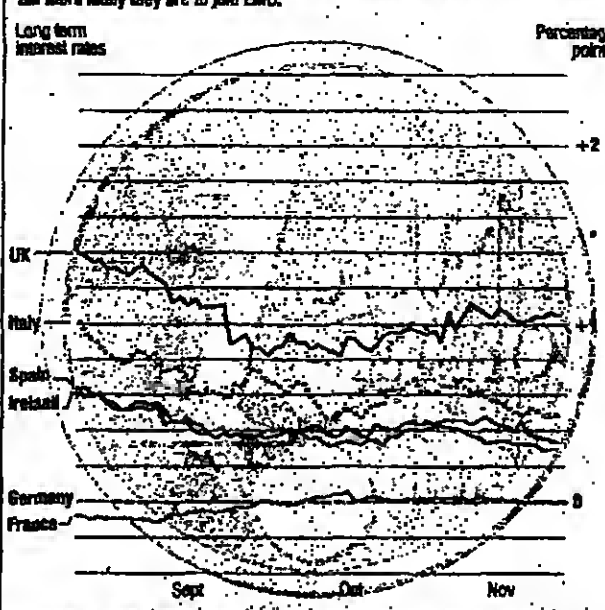
Meanwhile research group Incomes Data Services reports that some 75 per cent of firms are facing difficulties in filling vacancies and there is little sign that recruitment will become easier in the near future.

Skill shortages are having an impact on pay, especially in the construction and information technology sectors.

"It means that some employers are resorting to exceptional measures to recruit staff and hold on to them. We're now seeing bonuses both to attract people and to persuade them to stay," the report said.

Who will be in EMU? The financial markets' view

The closer other countries get to the dashed baseline (Germany) the more likely they are to join EMU.



TOWARDS EMU: The closer other countries get to the dashed baseline (Germany) the more likely they are to join EMU. The graph shows Germany at 0, France at approximately -1.5, Italy at -1.0, Spain at -0.5, Ireland at -0.2, and the UK at +1.5. The x-axis represents time from September to November.

AWAY FROM EMU: However, if they think the country won't be in EMU, that it will have higher inflation, and that there is a risk of a future devaluation against the mark, then they will demand an extra premium for holding that country's bonds, so the line will move away from the base.

When will EMU start? The City Analysts' View.

The Independent asked analysts from: Who Europe, Palau Webber, ABN Amro, JP Morgan, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, Salomon Brothers, Goldman Sachs, HSBC James Capel, UBS what probability they placed on EMU starting on time.

Probability EMU starts on time:	81%	(83% last week)
Probability EMU is delayed:	15%	(15% last week)
Probability EMU never happens:	4%	(2% last week)

France the only threat to timetable

The financial crisis in the Far East continues to monopolise the attention of the pundits and shift the spotlight away from Europe and EMU. European stock markets have suffered heavy falls but the effect on the real economies of Western European countries should not be so serious.

Nikko Europe's Julian Jessop notes that the German stock market is down 20 per cent but it is still 40 per cent higher than at the start of the year. German banks are conservative and have only a limited exposure to the crisis economies and Asia, including Japan, which only 8 per cent of German exports.

The risk of a rise in German interest rates has receded since the Bundesbank dropped hints that convergence could be achieved by Italy and Spain cutting interest rates rather than Germany raising its rates.

Meanwhile strong economic growth in Europe has reduced the risks of candidate countries failing the public sector borrowing test, and the only real threat to EMU proceeding on time now looks to be a sudden collapse in the French economy.

— Clifford German

NatWest Markets sell-off announcement 'on Tuesday'

National Westminster Bank will announce early next week that it is selling off parts of NatWest Markets, its all-in-one investment banking arm, to Bankers Trust, a US investment bank, and to Deutsche Morgan Grenfell (DMG), a subsidiary of Frankfurt-based Deutsche Bank. One source said: "It [the announcement of the sale] should be early next week, probably Tuesday if everything goes swimmingly". DMG is poised to buy NatWest's equity derivatives business for around £100m. The parties are understood to be wrangling over exactly how many of NatWest's overseas equity derivatives staff will transfer to DMG. Bankers Trust is set to purchase most of NatWest's larger global equities business, which has been valued at around £300m by the City.

Floor space for Dresdner

Dresdner Kleinwort Benson (DKB), the investment banking arm of Frankfurt-based Dresdner Bank, is to build a new trading floor and to increase its London office space by more than 30 per cent. Dresdner Bank is spending £40m on refurbishing Ebbgate House, previously occupied by BZW, the investment banking arm of Barclays Bank. A new 25,000 sq ft trading area is just part of the planned refurbishment. Around 800 employees in DKB's global markets and global financial divisions will move to the new offices in the second half of next year. DKB's existing Fenchurch Street offices will house the bank's global equities and corporate finance divisions.

Exchange hit by Talisman

The closure of Talisman, the London Stock Exchange's settlement system, has knocked down the Exchange's income by around one-third. The Exchange earned just £70m in the six months to September, compared to £105m during the same period last year, following the decision last April to transfer responsibility for settlements to the independently-owned Crest. But a substantial cut in costs, which fell by almost £20m to £46m, helped ensure that profits remained healthy. After tax and interest, a surplus of £18m was transferred to reserves, as compared with £10m this time last year. The Exchange said: "Our immediate tasks are to consolidate the operation of the order book, to continue to develop other new products on which we are currently working and to prepare for EMU and the Year 2000". The order book, which cost the Exchange £41.5m in development last year, was finally launched last month.

P&O in China joint venture

P&O is merging its bulk shipping operations in a joint venture with the Shougang Group of China. Lord Sterling, P&O chairman, announced the 50-50 deal in Beijing yesterday to create one of the world's largest modern dry cargo fleets. The agreement is the latest by P&O in a drive to boost shareholder returns. It's cross-Channel ferry business was recently given the go-ahead to merge with Stena, while P&O's container operations have been merged with Nedlloyd of the Netherlands. P&O Bulk Shipping operates 18 vessels transporting iron ore and coke. It made a small profit last year on sales of £130m.

Swedish bourses merge

The Stockholm Stock Exchange is to merge with OM Group, the Swedish derivatives exchange. The parties said the purpose of the deal was "to strengthen Stockholm - and thus the entire Nordic region - as a market place in the face of ever increasing competition from overseas bourses and financial markets". The OM Group will offer 11 OM shares for every three shares in the Swedish Stock Exchange. The merger, which was widely expected, should result in significant cost savings, according to the two exchanges. Per Larsson, OM's managing director, hinted that the new group could up its stake in the Helsinki Stock Exchange.

Shell outlines India plans

Shell has outlined plans for a big partnership in the oil business in India during meetings between the Indian Prime Minister, Inder Kumar Gujral and Mark Moody-Stuart, chairman of Shell Transport and Trading. The Anglo-Dutch oil giant said it had teamed up with another oil group, Saudi Aramco, to pursue projects in new markets and had identified India as their first initiative.

Sterling at three-month high

The pound climbed to its highest for three months following comments by the Governor of the Bank of England suggesting that rates might have to rise again. Eddie George said the economic slowdown was months away, and noted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer also expected the cost of borrowing to increase again. The Bank put rates up by a quarter point to 7.25 per cent this month. They are not expected to move again after next week's Monetary Policy Committee meeting, but in the new year. The pound almost touched DM2.97 yesterday, up from a close of just over DM2.95 on Thursday.

Potato disaster increases losses at Park Foods

It has been a bad week for Peter Johnson, millionaire chairman of Everton Football Club. Everton are firmly rooted to the bottom of the Premier League.

Things have got so bad that Mr Johnson will need a police escort to the home game with Tottenham today.

He is also chairman of Park Foods, the Merseyside marketing group best known for its Christmas hampers, which yesterday announced that its latest venture had gone disastrously wrong.

DJ Spuddles, Park Food's flavoured potato snack, launched last year, has proved to be an embarrassing flop. The product was targeted at the big food retailers but no contracts were signed before production began.

It has also got on the wrong side of the health lobby, which classifies it as a chip rather than a baked potato.

Spuddles has cost £11.7m to date but total sales were a desisory £87,500 in the six months to the end of September.

Park Foods traditionally loses money in the first half of the year but this year losses grew by 19 per cent to £6.2m.

A new version of Spuddles will be launched shortly which can be baked, not fried, but the future of the venture hangs in the balance.

Mr Johnson owns 67 per cent of the group.

— Clifford German

Public 'clueless' about self-assessment tax system

More than 300,000 people who have returned their self-assessment tax forms have had them sent back because of serious mistakes, according to Inland Revenue figures released yesterday.

The report came as accountants warned that the public remained largely clueless on the self-assessment system of tax, with seven out of 10 people failing to realise they faced a £100 fine if they missed the 31 January deadline.

A survey of self-employed taxpayers, conducted by London-based chartered account-

ants Levy Gee, suggested more than half of the 3 million who were still to complete their self-assessment had not yet bothered to look at their forms.

Paul Belsman, of Levy Gee's tax division, Jaxpro, said: "Ignorance and confusion on such a widespread scale, and so close to deadlines, is a clear indication that the self-assessment message is failing to get through."

"This is bad news for taxpayers. They are more likely to be dealing with Hannibal Hector than coddly Hector the Tax Inspector, star of the Govern-

ment's ad campaign, when the Inland Revenue eventually catches up with them."

The 300,000 forms that have been returned by the Inland Revenue represent just 6 per cent of the estimated 5 million forms which were successfully completed for the initial deadline of 31 September this year.

The Revenue had expected 10 per cent to be returned to senders.

However a further 3 million self-employed taxpayers are still to return their forms, with no guarantee that the Revenue will have their assessment ready

before 31 January, when the first payment falls due for the tax year 1996/97.

A Revenue spokesman said one-quarter of forms contained cosmetic mistakes but the level of serious mistakes, such as not signing the form or failing to fill in essential pages, was encouraging. "We are smiling, not frowning, at the numbers so far," the spokesman said. "A lot of the 3 million people will be represented by accountants. We always knew they would file late."

Tax advisers are asking for the deadline to be extended by one month in the first year of

self-assessment, fearing that too many of the self-employed are delaying filing in their forms until after Christmas.

Gerry Hart, a former president of the Chartered Institute of Taxation, who now heads up Tax Team, the self-assessment consultants, said: "This is a tremendous shift in responsibility from the state to the taxpayer. The problem is that people are already saying, 'Forget it, it can't be done until after Christmas'. By filing late, you'll be paying interest on your tax as well as paying a fine."

— Andrew Verity

Labour looks at coal options

The Government is considering proposals to prevent the closure of much of Britain's coal industry in moves which will raise hopes that some form of state support will materialise to keep deep mines open.

The measures under review include some of the recommendations made by the Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee after the 1992 coal crisis, when the Conservative government stunned the industry with plans to shut 31 pits with the loss of 30,000 jobs.

Richard Caborn, minister for the regions, regeneration and planning, who chaired the DTI select committee five years ago, is analysing a range of measures to help the industry. His role reflects growing concern within Government at potential damage to its reputation if RJB Mining, which owns most deep

mines, earmarks up to half of the remaining 17 pits for closure.

Government sources played down speculation yesterday that Mr Caborn was being brought in as a fixer to salvage Labour's energy policy after concern at the mounting criticism levelled at the DTI. Mr Caborn is to publish proposals to curb open-cast mining, fulfilling one of Labour's manifesto commitments, but is understood to be extending his probe into the future of coal after the next wave of contracts with power generators expire in four years' time.

Mr Caborn was said to be "dusting off" the recommendations in the select committee report, which were designed to create a long-term market for coal. One proposal was to subsidise the state-owned British Coal to help it compete with cheaper imports. Another pro-

posal was to encourage regional electricity companies to buy more coal-fired power and to cut their purchases of gas-fired energy.

The DTI has rejected a request for subsidies from RJB, insisting that it would not be appropriate to give direct aid to a private quoted company. However Mr Caborn's involvement will increase speculation that some other form of support could be under discussion. Sources emphasised that coal was no longer a problem confined to the DTI and was being co-ordinated at cabinet level.

This week the prospects for the industry worsened after RJB agreed a supply deal with National Power which would reduce the amount of coal the generator buys by more than half.

— Chris Godsmark

Richemont launches £1bn bid to buy remainder of Vendôme

Richemont, the Swiss-based conglomerate owned by South Africa's wealthy Rupert family, has launched a £1bn cash bid to buy out the minority shareholders in Vendôme, which owns some of the world's most glamorous luxury brands, including Dunhill, Cartier, Mont Blanc and Chloé, Stella McCartney's Paris fashion house.

Richemont, which already owns 70 per cent of Vendôme, is offering 495p a share for the remaining 30 per cent, valuing Vendôme, quoted in London and Luxembourg, at £3.45bn.

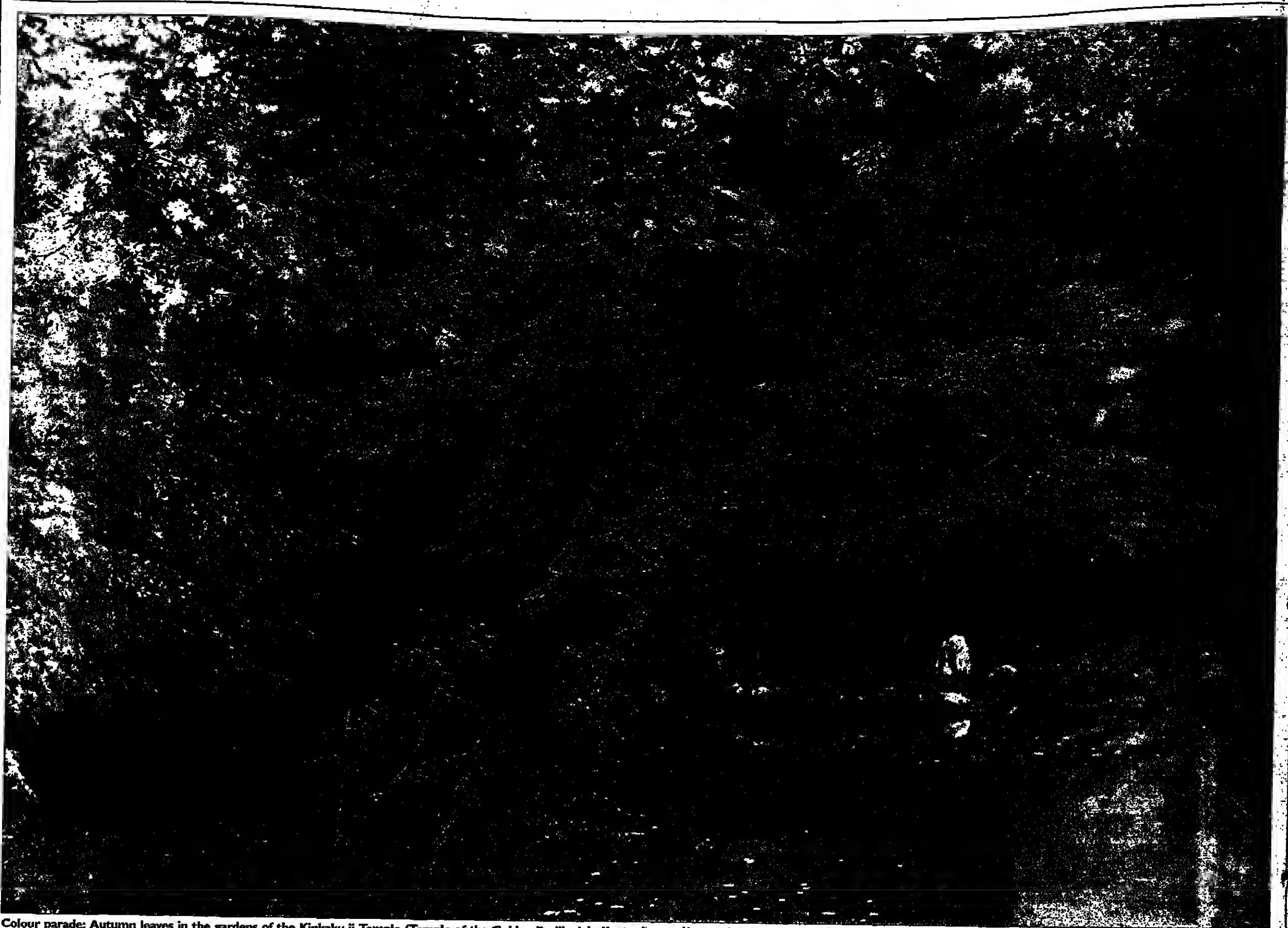
The price is a 26 per cent premium to the shares' pre-bid value. Vendôme's shares closed 79p higher yesterday at 472.5p. Though Johann Rupert, chief executive of Richemont, is hoping for a recommendation

from Vendôme's board, he said that the company may decide not to proceed with the offer if the world's financial markets collapsed further and threatened Vendôme's markets.

However, speaking at the group's interim results, Joseph Kanoui, Vendôme's chairman, said the financial turmoil had not affected the spending habits of its wealthy customers.

Mr Rupert expects the deal to go ahead smoothly. He said: "This is a generous premium for the minority shareholders. We only approached the board yesterday. We wanted to give them an opportunity to announce their half-yearly results without being prejudiced by a deal. That strategy cost us 60p in one day."

— Sameena Ahmed



Colour parade: Autumn leaves in the gardens of the Kinkaku-ji Temple (Temple of the Golden Pavilion) in Kyoto, Japan, where ministers from 160 countries will be assembling over the weekend for the United Nations Climate Summit which opens on Monday. This photograph, by David Swanborough, was taken with an 85mm lens, 250th of a second at f4, on Fuji 800 Asa film. To order a print of this photograph, telephone 0171-293 2534.

SIEMENS

A cardigan, how lovely, no really, it's just what I wanted and paisley as well, how...unique.



This Christmas, get to Santa before he gets to you. Ask for the new Siemens 30 which has just been voted the Best Business Mobile in the World by Cnnnect magazine, and which comes with 10 hours talktime, the world's best colour display and a very unique function. Better Technology from Siemens.

TOMORROW IN THE SEVEN-SECTION

INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



SEX INC.

Joan Smith investigates the erotica business

PLUS:

U2 exclusive – Bono talks to the *Sunday Review*

Christmas food and drink special – brilliant recipes and ideas from our team of experts

Decriminalise cannabis – the latest news in the campaign that everyone is talking about



TIME OFF

TRAVEL, LEISURE & SPORT

Saturday 29 November 1997



Chad valley: a trou au natron (salt hole) in the Sahara's highest range, the Tibesti mountains

Photograph: Martin Buckley

The secret heart of the Sahara

Chad is recovering from 30 years of war. The country now seems stable, and desperately needs to develop its economy. It would love to see tourists. Martin Buckley pioneered a trail.

My driver didn't want to stop. Our guide had warned him about *coupeurs de route* – modern-day highwaymen – and he squinted at the old man who ran to us from a palm-frond hut, flapping his arms. Yet he looked harmless enough and I asked the driver to stop. The old man told us that his baby grandson was born, and his daughter had set off with a camel the previous night. But the town was 100 miles away. If we met him on the way, could we please give her a lift? We had been driving for a week through a vast land of mountains, deserts and volcanic craters – with no roads. I kept thinking that in the United States all this would be a national park. In America, freeways slice through the wilderness, carrying you to the

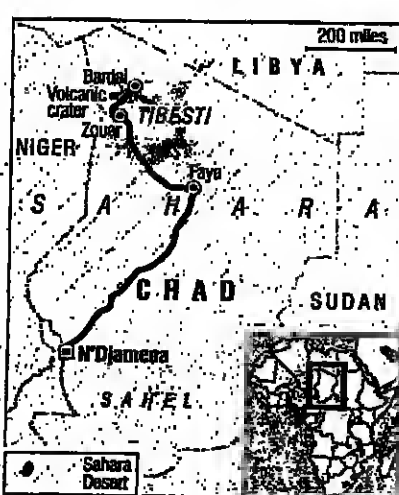
very edge of every natural wonder. But in the Chadian Sahara you're lucky to find a row of marker posts leading you through the sands, or around a minefield. Astonishing landscapes and rock paintings can be reached only by those with time, money, and one or preferably two Land Rovers.

And nothing puts off tourists like a war. Chad was in a state of war for nearly 30 years. In the Eighties it suffered famine, became known as the world's poorest country, and received a fleeting audience with Bob Geldof. Today Chad seems to be stable, but it urgently needs to develop its tiny economy. And it would love to see a few more tourists.

The capital, N'Djamena, has the colonnaded, sleepy air of a Mediterranean backwater. Its market sprawls around a large mosque, and there's a wealthier, tree-lined avenue with banks, a pâtisserie, and épiceries selling wine and tinned *foie gras*. If you want to hire a vehicle, you can – at a price. But I got lucky. I met Father Bessita, whose parish must be one of the world's remotest – the tiny Christian com-

munities scattered among the Arab tribes of the Chadian desert. If I would pay for the diesel, he'd take me with him on one of his thrice-yearly jaunts.

We drove into the semi-arid Sahel, and



then across savannah, where we saw – and, rather to my discomfort, hunted – gazelle. We crossed great tracts of desert, with dunes where the wind covered our tracks within minutes of passing. We came upon a broken-down truck whose inhabitants rushed forward with empty water-bottles, and *le père* took their grateful driver aboard. Then we ran out of water ourselves. We were crossing a plain where sheets of perilously soft sand alternated with tooth-loosening broken gravel. The heat was intense. I will never forget reaching the top of an escarpment and looking down on the desert town of Faya. Those thousands of tawny dots were trees, and trees meant water.

Faya has the makings of a popular tourist destination – a striking setting, some pleasant, rather Moorish buildings, a halo of palm fronds; it is close to desert, mountains and lakes. But there are artillery holes in its water-tower and there is no electricity. Chicken claws, goats' hooves and sardine cans litter the sand of the streets. You watch out for the scorpions, whose sting can kill a man. The only hotel offers, at £18, dirty,

airless rooms that would be over-priced at a fiver. But Faya is remote, so everything is overpriced there. Everything except the smuggled corn oil, tinned fish and petrol on sale at the Libyan Market.

Bessita is a big man, 6ft-something, fleshy and charismatic. On Sunday morning, he celebrated Mass in Faya's shady, shoebox-shaped church, his vast form in crisp white linen looming over the leaner congregation. Men played drums made from tinned shell casings, men and women swayed, girl-children danced, God became flesh and wine.

On Monday he headed out to his flocks in the eastern desert. And I went north west, towards Libya, having hired a battered pick-up Jeep and driver in Faya. My driver, Abdul, had never been this way before, and was nervous. I had good maps and a GPS (satellite position-finder), and was also nervous. By chance, we met a man who wanted to travel to the far side of the next stretch of desert, and he became our guide. We drove past orange dunes, and across white sand of utter flatness, driving

under a full moon late into the night without any need for headlights.

It was mid-morning on our second day out of Faya when we met the old man who wasn't a highwayman, and soon when we found his daughter, sitting out the midday heat in a small grove of thorny desert trees. Her mother crouched beside her, and a boy tended the camel. The sick baby's eyes were acid yellow – presumably hepatitis. I put the women and baby into the cab, and climbed on to the back of the pick-up. Dark, sun-baked sandstone rose around us as the jeep climbed the barren foothills of the Tibesti Massif, the tallest mountains in the Sahara. It's a land of stark inhospitality, home to isolated and secretive tribespeople, mostly nomadic herders.

In late afternoon we saw before us a magnificent vision: a blood-red track through black rock leading down to the Zouar Valley, a broad sand plain locked in by rose-coloured sandstone cliffs 200ft high. At the checkpoint outside town, a soldier stared at me. I was quenching my thirst

Continued page 3

INSIDE

CITY BREAKS

Two-day Dublin/3

WORLD FESTIVALS

Go-go or no-go? 6/7

SPORT

THE VOICE OF RACING

Peter O'Sullivan bows out/18

HERO'S RETURN

Bjorn Borg in London/22

THE ONE

SMOKING CAUSES CANCER

Chief Medical Officers' Warning
1 mg Tar / 0.1 mg Nicotine



VC.
Investigates the
business

2/BITAIN



Roman holiday: South Shields is one of the few places in Britain where you can see almost the whole layout of a Roman fort

Photograph: Ted Ditchburn

Back to barracks in Roman Tyne and Wear

Time and weather have been cruel to much of Britain's Roman past. But at South Shields, there is a wonderful opportunity to look up, not down, at our classical heritage, writes Guy de la Bédoyère.

Unlike the usual Roman military establishment perched on a bleak hillside, Arbeia Roman fort at South Shields is slap bang in the middle of rows of terraced houses, only yards away from guesthouses and fish and chip shops. Fort Street, Trajan Avenue, Spasian Street and Roman Road rather give the time away.

This gem of Roman Britain has been exposed for nearly a century, but it's only in the last 20 years that it has really come alive. It's a perfect visit if you (or your children) are tired of crumbling piles of stones. South Shields' magnificent reconstructed Roman gateway impresses everyone who walks through it.

Hadrian's Wall, built in AD120 or so, ran from Eborac in the east to Bowness-on-Solway in the west. The lower Tyne was strategically vital. The Britons would duck round the end of the Wall, just as the Germans dodged round the Maginot Line, and cross over. The Romans built South Shields fort. Sitting on the north bank like a spider, it had a perfect view of the river valley. Long before the Romans arrived, Iron Age farmers lived here. Their roundhouse, which had burned down around about 250BC, was found underneath the much later Roman parade ground.

That parade ground probably belonged to a fort built around the time of Hadrian's Wall - but the early fort has not been found, because in the

AD160s a new stone fort was built on top of it. The Romans loved standard specifications. And South Shields was a standard fort: playing-card outline, four gates, headquarters building, barracks, granaries and latrines. This is one of the few places in Britain where you can see almost the whole layout.

The fort had a thriving civilian settlement outside its walls. Some of the tombstones on display in the museum tell us about the cosmopolitan population. Regina, for one, was a member of the Catuvellauni, a tribe from the Hertfordshire area. She had been a slave, but was freed by her master, Barates. He was from Palmyra, in Syria, and commissioned Regina's magnificent tombstone when she died at the age of 30. He added a line in his own Palmyrene language, saying "Regina, freedwoman of Barates, alas!"

It's a touching portrayal of a woman who was clearly mourned. So, too, was the 30-year-old freedman Victor, from Mauretania in north-west Africa. "devotedly conducted" to his grave by his former master Numerianus, a trooper in the First Ala of Asturians (a cavalry regiment from north-western Spain); this is thought by some to be evidence of a homosexual relationship. Both tombstones are in the form of architectural frames, resembling buildings in Syria. They were probably carved by the same sculptor, who may have come from there.

South Shields was later adapted as a storehouse for the Emperor Septimius Severus (AD193-211) who came here early in the third century to fight a war. Severus, so the story goes, was fed up with his sons, Caracalla and Geta, spending their time on the razze in Rome. Fighting in northern Britain would soon toughen them up. As the Caledonians were causing trouble as usual, there was a good excuse for a war. At South Shields all the usual buildings were

cleared away and about 22 new granaries erected. The garrison was confined to barracks in a fort extension. Severus invaded Caledonia, but his plans fell apart. He died in York in AD211. Caracalla abandoned the campaign, and murdered his brother the next year.

Caracalla met his own bloody end in AD217, but it wasn't the end of South Shields. It remained a stores base, and in AD222 an aqueduct was built to bring water. The inscription recording the event is on display in the museum.

Despite a fire in about AD300, the fort was rebuilt. South Shields became one of the most exotic locations in Britain: the new garrison was a unit of Tigris boatmen. The Roman army had always used provincials with special skills. Navigating the Tyne and bringing up supplies from down south called for experts in moving goods around in small coastal lighters. The boatmen came from the province of Arabia, perhaps the origin of the fort's Roman name, Arbeia ("Place of the Arabs"), but no one really knows.

The Tigris boatmen's commanding officer had Mediterranean tastes. He built himself a courtyard house with summer and winter dining-rooms, and a bath suite, using a plan similar to that of the houses of Pompeii, which had been destroyed by Vesuvius about 300 years earlier.

This part of the fort is being excavated at the moment, and earlier this year a Roman suit of armour was unearthed in the area, an extraordinarily rare find. The many other finds on display in the excellent museum include cameos and other jewellery, some made of jet. The jet came from near Whitby, and waste found there makes it likely that this was a centre of the jet industry.

Walking round South Shields today, you can't fail to be struck by the imposing west gate. It's a replica,

built in 1986, and is best seen from outside the site, but you can go inside and climb up into the towers. It gives a superb idea of the original appearance of a massive, twin-portal Roman military gateway.

Once Britain stopped being a Roman province after AD410, the history of South Shields becomes a mystery, but the fort must have had a use. The area became the Saxon kingdom of Deira. One legend is that King Oswin, who died in AD651, was born at Caer Urfia. Urfia just may be a corruption of Arbeia.

South Shields is a marvellous place to take children, especially those studying the Romans at school. The local authority could make a better job of sign-posting it, because all too many people miss out on South Shields when they visit Hadrian's Wall. And if it's a hit on the nippy side, where else can you walk out of a Roman fort and buy fish and chips, guaranteed to warm the cockles of the heart of the coldest Tigris boatman?

Arbeia Roman Fort (0191 454 4093) is open Mon-Sat 10am-4pm, entrance to museum and grounds free, except for the Time Quest gallery: adults £1, children 50p. Access by road is via the A185/A194 from Gateshead. Approaching South Shields up the A194, watch for a roundabout exit to the B1303 (Station Road, becoming River Drive) that skirts round the north of South Shields by the Tyne and turn right down Baring Street. The fort is on your left. Access by Metro (South Shields Station) involves a 15-20-minute walk: head east down King Street and carry on into Ocean Road, take the first left turn after the roundabout (Baring Street) and walk north for half a mile to the museum.

Guy de la Bédoyère is the presenter of Radio 4's series 'The Romans in Britain', on Saturdays at 4pm.



SIMON CALDER

"Can you or your readers please help me to survive a four-hour stopover at Los Angeles airport?" asks Kit Norman of Lincolnshire. "I've suffered the bleak conditions in LA's transit lounge before: bad coffee in plastic cups, a 'duty-free' kiosk that seems to sell only crisps and chocolate, and a toilet block that makes you wish you'd gone before you left the plane."

"I have time to go through passport control and into the terminals, but where do I go from there? Does any of the many terminals have a shower, a decent restaurant or even a multi-gym with Turkish bath and massage?"

"Things are slightly complicated by the fact that I'll be there on Christmas Day, but any tips to make transfers in LA bearable would be appreciated."

Mr Norman appears to be an Xmas-phile, since he will be stretching 25 December by at least eight hours by flying west. I fear, though, that he will find that corner of California cheerless. Civilisation (if down town Los Angeles can be so described) is at least 45 minutes away, and the only airport massage I have experienced was 2,000 miles away at Chicago O'Hare where I was researching last week's "48 Hours" story. It lasted 10 minutes, cost the same in pounds and hugely improved the flight home.

Solutions to Mr Norman's conundrum will be published here before Christmas, providing that they do not include smuggling quantities of in-flight miniatures off the plane for an impromptu transit lounge party.

In the film *My Best Friend's Wedding*, the hotel featured is Chicago's finest - the Drake. I did not include it among the accommodation options because of a nightly rate of around £200. But Mike MacFarlane of London says that I should have persevered.

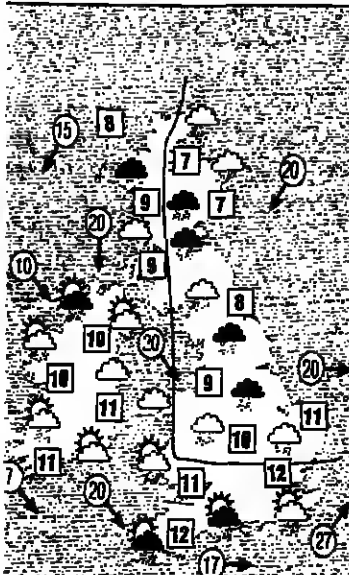
"The 'rack rate' quoted by American hotels is almost always negotiable. I turned up at the reception of the Drake and asked for the price of a room. I was told \$330. I said I couldn't afford that much, and offered \$100. Eventually we settled on \$135 (about £80)."

Even though he had secured a 60 per cent discount, the story didn't quite end there. "While I was waiting for my credit card to be processed, I noticed a door to the back office ajar. Inside, a handwritten sign proclaimed 'Absolutely the lowest rate tonight: \$125'."

Wherever you wander in the US, don't forget your passport; even if your visage is as old and raddled as the one above, you may be asked for photo ID to prove your age when you buy alcohol or cigarettes. And increasingly, identification is demanded for any transaction involving a credit card or travellers' cheques. In the Burbank branch of Vons supermarket, though, the check-out clerk was prepared to let me pay with a travellers' cheque but without ID, providing I answered this question correctly: "Is it yours?"

WEATHER

The British Isles, noon today



Monday midday (GMT): London: 14°C; Edinburgh: 10°C; Manchester: 12°C; Birmingham: 11°C; Cardiff: 9°C; Belfast: 8°C; Glasgow: 10°C; Liverpool: 11°C; Nottingham: 13°C; Leeds: 12°C; Newcastle: 10°C; Southampton: 14°C; Swansea: 11°C; Wolverhampton: 12°C; York: 10°C.

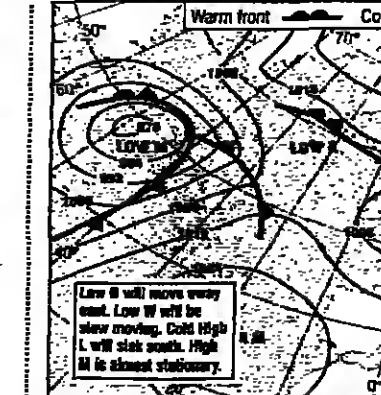
City	Temp	City	Temp	City	Temp
Birmingham	11.59	Cardiff	9.48	Edinburgh	10.58
Bristol	16.06	Cardiff	9.48	Edinburgh	10.58
Cardiff	9.48	Cardiff	9.48	Edinburgh	10.58
Cardiff	9.48	Cardiff	9.48	Edinburgh	10.58
Cardiff	9.48	Cardiff	9.48	Edinburgh	10.58
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Cardiff	9.48	Cardiff	9.48	Edinburgh	10.58
Cardiff	9.48	Cardiff	9.48	Edinburgh	10.58
Cardiff	9.48	Cardiff	9.48	Edinburgh	10.58

General summary and outlook

Scotland will have a mostly overcast and damp day with spells of rain and a chilly wind, although sheltered western areas will be drier with a few brighter spells. Northern Ireland will see a few bright or sunny spells, but showers are also likely, perhaps merging to give some longer spells of rain at times. Northern England, east Wales and the Midlands will be cloudy with outbreaks of rain. Southern England and west Wales will have showers and a little sunshine. Tomorrow will be a brighter day in most places with some sunshine, but a few showers are still likely - the showers turning to snow over the Scottish mountains. During the first half of next week a cold north-easterly airflow is expected to become established across the UK. Initially any wintry weather should be confined to high ground, but there will be widespread night frosts, and there is a possibility of snow flurries on low ground by mid-week.

City	Temp	City	Temp	City	Temp
Birmingham	11.59	Cardiff	9.48	Edinburgh	10.58
Bristol	16.06	Cardiff	9.48	Edinburgh	10.58
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Cardiff	9.48	Cardiff	9.48	Edinburgh	10.58
Cardiff	9.48	Cardiff	9.48	Edinburgh	10.58

Atlantic chart, noon today



World weather most recent available figures at noon local time

City	Temp	City	Temp	City	Temp
Athens	18.51	Frankfurt	12.54	New York	8.46
Bombay	21.70	Glasgow	11.52	Paris	13.55
Bombay	21.70	Glasgow	11.52	Paris	13.55
Bombay	21.70	Glasgow	11.52	Paris	13.55
Bombay	21.70	Glasgow	11.52	Paris	13.55
Bombay	21.70	Glasgow	11.52	Paris	13.55
Bombay	21.70	Glasgow	11.52	Paris	13.55
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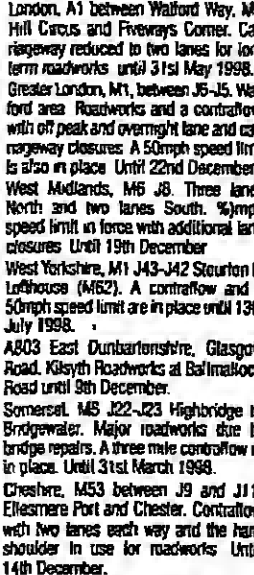
AA Roadwatch

London, A1 between Watford Way, Mill Hill Circus and Five Ways Corner. Carriageway reduced to two lanes for long term roadworks until 31st May 1998. Greater London, M1, between J6-J5, Watford area. Roadworks and a contraflow, with off-peak and overnight lane and carriageway closures. A 50mph speed limit is also in place. Until 22nd December. West Midlands, M6 J8. Three lanes North and two lanes South. 50mph speed limit in force with additional lane closures. Until 19th December. West Yorkshire, M1 J43-J42. Stourton to Luffessdale (M2). A contraflow and a 50mph speed limit are in place until 19th July 1998. A803 East Dunbartonshire, Glasgow Road, Kilsyth Roadworks at Balmulloch Road until 28th December. Somerset, M5 J22-J23. Highbridge to Bridgwater. Major roadworks close to bridge repairs. A three mile contraflow is in place. Until 31st March 1998. Cheshire, M53 between J9 and J11. Cheshire Park and Chester. Contraflow with two lanes each way and the hard shoulder in use for roadworks. Until 14th December. West Yorkshire, M62 J28-J29. Dewsbury to Leeds (M1). A contraflow and a 50mph speed limit are in place. Until 30th June 1999.

Art and about with AA Roadwatch

Call 0300 401 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 39p per min (plus VAT) 48p per min (plus VAT) 19p per min (plus VAT).

The sky at night



The constellation Perseus, containing the celebrated variable star Algol, has risen by nightfall and is virtually overhead by 11pm to midnight.

Minima of Algol occur around 11.30pm on Tuesday and 6.20pm on Friday. Like a couple condemned to waltz till they die for the sin of being too intimate, the two stars of Algol perform an incessant dance, circling around each other in gravity's unbreakable embrace. As the darker partner in an unequal match eclipses its more dazzling companion, Algol fades. In four hours it loses well over a magnitude. Maximum eclipse lasts just 20 minutes before the 4-hour recovery commences. The whole performance repeats every two days 20 hours and 53 minutes. More than 100 minima of Algol occur in a year, but only a quarter of them are observable. This week provides two opportunities, both conveniently before midnight: 11.20-11.40pm on Tuesday the 2nd and at 8.10-8.30pm on Friday the 5th. Two stars in nearby Cassiopeia are useful comparators for judging Algol's progress. Alpha Cassiopeiae shines like Algol at its brightest (magnitude 2.2), while Epsilon resembles Algol's darkest moments (magnitude 3-5).

Jacqueline Mitten

3/CITY BREAK

THE INDEPENDENT
SATURDAY 29 NOVEMBER 1997
3



Liquid culture: Guinness and the River Liffey, above, course through the heart of Dublin; below, a door on World Street

Photographs: P. Thurston/Telegraph Colour Library

48 hours in the life of Dublin

Each week, *'The Independent'* provides a prescription for a perfect weekend break. This week, Daniel Ford offers a short cut to the soul of Dublin.

Why go now?

Christmas shopping turns Dublin's streets into a festival - with musicians on nearly every corner to entertain you through the day and into the night. Dublin is always a treat, but the shorter days and longer nights make the numerous pubs cosy with real fires. There is a buzz all over the city - both inside and out.

Beam down

Air fares between the UK and Dublin are low, even with £10 UK tax (included in all the fares below). The lowest fare on Ryanair (0541 569569) from Birmingham, Bristol, Luton, Manchester, Prestwick or Stansted is £48 return (book by 8 December); from Liverpool and Teesside, £59; from Cardiff £69; from Gatwick £79. Lowest of all is from Bournehead (£39 before 19 December, and 7-29 January). Other airlines with scheduled services include Aer Lingus (0181-899 4747) from numerous UK airports, British Airways from Gatwick (0345 222111) and British Midland (0345 554554) from East Midlands and Heathrow.

By sea, the fastest route is on Stena Line (0990 707070). A weekend return for a car plus five people is £179 for the 100-minute crossing from Holyhead to Dun Laoghaire, six miles south-east of Dublin.

Get your bearings

The best way to cover the six miles south from the airport to the city centre is by Air Link bus. The half-hour trip to the Central Bus Station, or Busaras, costs £2.50.

The Liffey divides Dublin into two distinct areas. The north is where many of the galleries and theatres can be found, while the south is the more social centre, with hotels, pubs, restaurants and shops. Temple Bar is the main area for pubs -

many of which have live music - and restaurants.

Roads south of Temple Bar, Grafton Street and Nassau, offer more eateries and drinking-holes, along with the better shops. Dublin Castle and the magnificent Trinity College are also in this area. North of the river, most points of interest are situated around O'Connell Street.

The main Dublin Tourism Centre (00 353 1 605 7700) is in a converted church on Suffolk Street, near Trinity College.

Check in

Probably the most charming (and famous) of Dublin's hotels is the Shelbourne Hotel (00 353 1 676 6471), at 27 St Stephen's Green. It is also one of the most expensive, with a weekend rate of £170 per room per night for a standard double including breakfast; the weekday rate is £152. The band U2 has an interest in the top-range Clarence (bookings through 0800 181535). At the other end of the scale, the city centre has plenty of hostels. One of the best is Avalon House (00 353 1 475 0001) in Augier Street. Prices start at £7.50 in a 12-bed dorm; twin rooms cost £12 per person.

Much of the mid-range accommodation is around the Victorian suburb of Ballsbridge, a lively area to the south-east of the city. Prices per person are in the £25-£30 range. Northumberland Lodge (00 353 1 660 5270), in Northumberland Road, is very welcoming, and charges £65 for a double room including breakfast.

Take a ride From Pearse Station, near Trinity College,

whisk yourself away on the excellent local train service - Dart, short for Dublin Area Rapid Transit - to Killiney. This magnificent and beautiful beach suburb is half-an-hour from the city centre and is home to Dublin's rich and famous - particularly those who have made their cash in music. The station is practically on the beach, so take a short walk along the sand looking over Dublin Bay. If the tide is out you can stroll all the way along the beach to Dalkey; alternatively, come off the beach and walk along the Vico Road until you get to the sign for Killiney Hill Park. The walk up and over the hill is well worth it, offering fantastic views across the ocean and south to Wicklow.

You come down into Dalkey, where you can pick up the Dart back into the city. However, you would be doing yourself a great injustice if you did not stop at Finnegan's on the Sorrento Road, next to

the Dart station, for a pint of Guinness and the freshest scampi imaginable.

Take a hike

Stroll through the old cobbled streets of Temple Bar, the beating heart of Dublin's social life; the place is alive with street performers and musicians. A three-minute walk south of Temple Bar down Westmoreland Street will bring you to the majestic Trinity College. Entry is free, which is just as well, since a visit here is a must if you want to understand something of Dublin's literary and political history. You will, however, need to pay £3.50 to see the ancient Book of Kells in the spectacular Old Library, open 9.30am to 5.30pm. Various walking tours start at Trinity College; the guides are usually highly visible.

Lunch on the run

The unequivocal front-runner for a mid-day meal is Beshoff Fish and Chips, 14 Westmoreland Street (and also at 7 Upper O'Connell Street). For £2.99 you get a fabulous piece of morning-fresh cod in a superb, delicate batter, and excellent, crispy chips from potatoes grown on Beshoff's own farm in Tipperary. This is a Dublin institution, and an absolute treat.

Cultural afternoon

In a city that has nurtured such literary heavyweights as Wilde, Shaw, Yeats, Joyce, Beckett and Swift, you'll want to make a hit of a pilgrimage. Heading north over the Liffey, a walk up the remarkably wide O'Connell Street brings you to Parnell Square. The

Dublin Writers Museum (00 353 1 872 2077) is at No 18 (next door to the Living Writers Museum). Here you get a taste of Irish literary history, from early Christian writings to the works of Brendan Behan (adults £2.90, children £1.20, Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sunday 11.30am-6pm).

From here, cross Parnell Square East Road and head into Gardiner Row, where Belvedere College is situated - Joyce was a student here - then turn down into North Great George's Street, where you'll find the James Joyce Centre at No 35 (00 353 1 878 8547) - open Mon-Sat 9.30am-5pm, Sun 12.30-5pm. The £2.75 entrance fee is worth it just to see inside this magnificent Georgian building, with its detailed stucco work on the walls and ceiling. The centre is full of all manner of Joyce-related information, including the original door of 7 Eccles Road (Leopold Bloom's address in *Ulysses*).

For a less sober slant on the city's history, take the Literary Pub Crawl - this is £6 well spent. Starting at the Duke, on Duke Street, at 7.30pm Thur/Fri/Sat, actors take you around a number of pubs enacting scenes from Irish plays and giving anecdotes regarding the drinking habits of Dublin's writers: "I am a drinker with a writing problem," quipped Brendan Behan.

An aperitif

If you can get in, the Horseshoe Bar at the Shelbourne Hotel is the place for a pre-dinner tipple. Alternatively, the locals will make you feel very much at home at Neary's, on Chatham Street. Enter beneath outstretched Art Deco arms holding flaming candles, and sneak inside the impressive gas-lit interior for a pint of Guinness.

Demure dinner

The Coopers Café (00 353 1 660 1525) at the Sweepstakes Centre, Ballsbridge, is a treat. It'll set you back about £30 per person, but it is a fabulous modern restaurant, and suggests a taste of more good things to come to Dublin. Those on a tighter budget should head for the clean sur-

roundings of Milano (00 353 1 670 3384) on Essex Street, Temple Bar, where you can enjoy a fantastic pizza or pasta dish for about £6.

Sunday morning: go to church

There is certainly no shortage of options in Dublin. For real tradition, try St Mary's Pro-Cathedral on Mary Street. You certainly won't be on your own; this huge cathedral is full of worshippers at 11am. Delivered entirely in Latin, this 90-minute service is wonderful, with the famous Palestrina Choir lifting the experience to the sublime.

Bracing brunch

A five-minute walk down O'Connell Street, over the bridge and back into Temple Bar offers a couple of great brunch opportunities. The foremost of these is the Elephant and Castle (00 353 1 679 3121) where you can while away a couple of hours with a Bloody Mary and a choice from the impressive brunch menu in busy but comfortable surroundings. Book ahead.

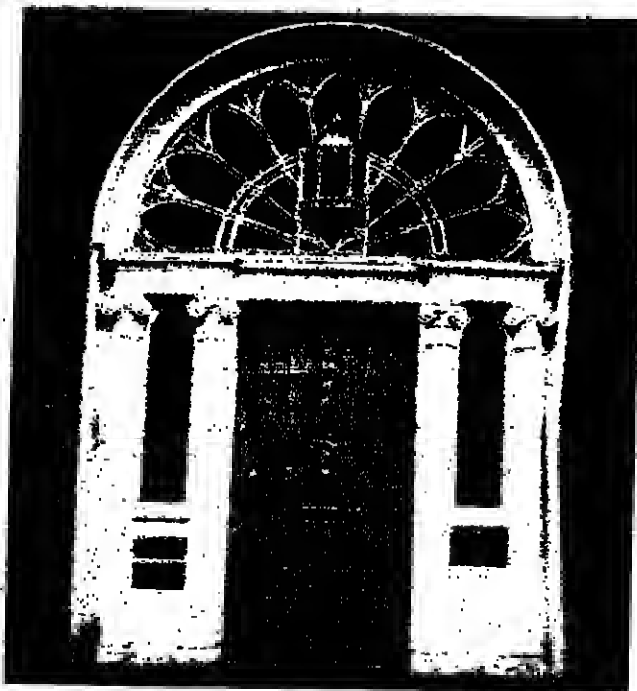
Just across the road from here is Fitzers Café (00 353 1 679 0440), which has stark, modern décor with particularly disorienting unisex toilets. The starter menu here offers good, brunch-style fare.

A walk in the park

Phoenix Park, home of Dublin Zoo, may seem the obvious choice for a Sunday perambulation, but a better option is St Stephen's Green, a short walk down Grafton Street. This is an attractive area with a large pond, rambling hedges and sculptured lawns, and a large number of Victorian bandstands and gazebos dotted about.

The icing on the cake

Lots of cakes, in fact. No trip to the city is complete without a visit to Bewley's Oriental Café on Grafton Street. This elegant coffee shop is a Dublin institution, serving cakes, buns, coffee and full meals to hungry shoppers. On Sundays, it opens 8am-11pm.



The secret heart of the Sahara

Continued from page 1 with a mango brought from Faya, and the soldier looked as though he wanted to hit me. "Don't eat that thing in front of me," he spat, in French. "I haven't seen a mango for four years. I haven't been south or seen my family for four years."

The fate of black African soldiers from the south posted to the north is unenviable. Much of Chad's civil strife has been along the ethnic-linguistic fault line between the black, usually Christian, south, and the Arab-Muslim north, a legacy of the French colonial carve-up. The genial and loose-limbed southerners are at a loss among the dour, self-sufficient Arabs. Mostly soldiers, they can spend many years posted in Tibesti, often unpaid for months on end. "What are we doing here?" I was asked by one desperate man who hadn't been relieved

for 10 years. "Are we prisoners of war, or what?" Desertion is impossible; they'd soon die in the desert, and if they were caught they'd be shot. So they wait, smoking Libyan cigarettes and listening on short-wave radios to football results and reports of African wars.

I reached into the box and handed the soldier a mango. In delight, he almost danced back to his shack to eat it.

Zouar is a cluster of mud-block houses and palm-fronted huts on a sand plain. Being responsible for a sick child brought home to me the statistics - that Chad has a severe shortage of doctors, and one of the world's highest infant mortality rates - 20 times Britain's. We found the doctor at his home in the military quarter. He examined the baby and diagnosed hepatitis and a severe lung infection. Would he live? I asked. "Oh yes," he

said, "if we treat him. There's just one problem: medicines. I never have enough drugs. At the moment I haven't even a handful of paracetamol."

And so we spent hours visiting Zouar's unofficial pharmacies. People travel huge distances for medicines, clinging to the tops of trucks that smuggle goods down from the Libyan border. They face dehydration and attacks by bandits, and, understandably, they sell the drugs at exorbitant prices. We found most of what we needed, but one important drug was missing.

The next morning a guide took me through an uncleared Libyan minefield north, towards Bardai, deep in the Tibesti Massif. The roughly-hewn mountain pass scrapes the edge of a gigantic pink volcanic crater whose floor, far below, glistens white with salt. In this mountain desert

there's a little moisture, and you see some wild flowers, and soaring black eagles. I explored for hours, amazed to be alone in a place of such extraordinary beauty.

That night we reached the palm oasis of Bardai. I spent the night at the small French garrison, guest of six hospitable soldiers unused to welcoming European visitors. The captain was well versed in international politics, and it seemed reasonable to wonder what he and his men were doing in this remote spot. Was it their job, I asked, to monitor the Libyans, who are just a few miles north? In the late Eighties much of northern Chad was occupied by Libya, and General Gadhafi's forces were thrown out only with French help.

"No," he said stiffly, "Our sole task is to provide military assistance to the Chadian army." Tell it to the marines.

When I left Bardai the French adjutant, a Schwarzenegger-muscled Polynesian, presented me with a large box of drugs for the doctor at Zouar, including the very one needed by the baby boy. It was extraordinarily generous, and brought a lump to my throat. And so it was that my return journey to Zouar was a triumph over adversity. On the way I stopped to look at prehistoric cave paintings like those in *The English Patient* - cattle, elephants and giraffe daubed on the rock, recalling that 5,000 years ago these barren mountains were covered with lakes and trees. There are still subterranean aquifers, and one day the hills may be green again. One day, too, if Chad stays free of war, tourists will begin to discover this astonishing landscape. Until then, Tibesti will remain the barren and secret heart of the Sahara.

THE CHALLENGE OF CHAD

The Africa Travel Group (0171-387 1211) offers flights on Air France from various UK airports via Paris to the capital of Chad for £910 including tax. In N'Djamena you can hire reliable four-wheel drive vehicles, only with driver - check his mechanical expertise, and that enough spares are carried. Two-vehicle expeditions are safest.

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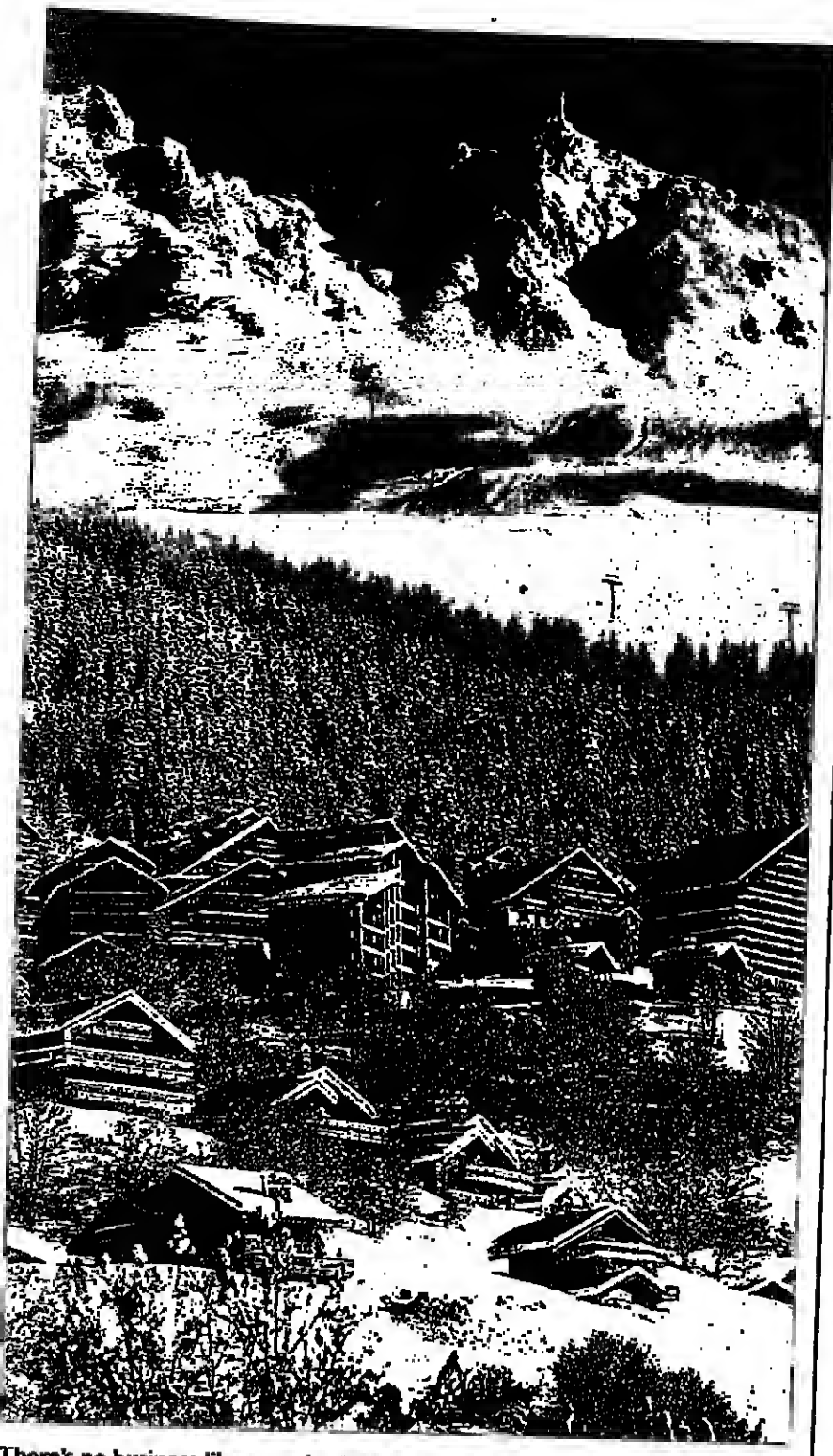
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5/SKIING

THE INDEPENDENT
SATURDAY 29 NOVEMBER 1997
5

From Finland to France, it's uphill all the way



There's no business like snow business: chalets fitter Alpine slopes at Méribel

WHY WE GO WHERE

Caroline Stuart-Taylor, managing director of the Ski Club of Great Britain, explains why skiers are choosing the top five destinations.

1. **France** (24.9 per cent of the market for 1997/98 ski holiday bookings): "It's doing well primarily because of the exchange rate; we're getting about 16 per cent more francs to the pound than this time last year. But France has also been working hard to promote itself, with things such as its special 'Kids ski free' offers in January."
2. **Italy** (20.6 per cent): "People swooped on Italy a couple of years ago because it was so cheap – and having been there, many of them obviously found they like it. It isn't such a bargain now, but people still think it is."
3. **Austria** (15.4 per cent): "It has always been popular, particularly with beginners, because of the traditional chocolate-box ambience of its mountain villages; but in recent years it has been very expensive. Now the schilling has dropped sharply against the pound, so it has become cheaper."
4. **Andorra** (10 per cent): "The snow was good in Andorra last year, and it has always been a keenly priced destination. Because of the British ski school at Soldeu, it is a good place for beginners, which has also increased its popularity."
5. **Canada** (9.6 per cent): "It has done well over the last few years, and gained a reputation for good skiing; the advent of charter flights has made it more accessible."

*The market-share figures are for bookings made up to the end of October



Val d'Isère, one of France's biggest winter drawcards Photograph: Dave Roman

Which is this year's hot spot (so to speak) for skiing? Armed with the Holiday Booking Survey, Stephen Wood figures out how the different countries are doing in the snakes-and-ladders business of the slopes.

This time last year, there was no doubt which was the most popular skiing destination. It was Bulgaria, where sales of skiing holidays were up 89 per cent over the previous season. In the early part of the 1996/7 booking season, up to the beginning of October, its growth was ahead of Canada's (76 per cent) and Andorra's (71 per cent). The traditional market leaders were trailing so far behind that they weren't even in Bulgaria's wake: France was down 12 per cent, year-on-year, and Austria's sales had dropped by a whopping 27 per cent.

True, Bulgaria was actually outperformed by Finland. Starting from a low base – a total of 12 skiing holidays in that country had been sold up to October 1995 – Finland's sales to the beginning of October 1996 had shot up to 345, an increase of 4,442 per cent. But it was Bulgaria, with sales of 7,419 holidays, which seemed set to be the star of the season.

It didn't actually turn out that way. In the early months of this year, poor snow (Bulgaria was the only major destination to suffer in that respect) and political unrest in Sofia – which led to skiing charters being diverted to Plovdiv – conspired to reduce bookings; and at the end of the season, Bulgaria's year-on-year increase had slipped to 44 per cent – still impressive, but some way behind Canada and Andorra, which had maintained their growth rate (76 and 72 per cent respectively) throughout the season. And while Bulgaria was slipping, France had recovered sufficiently to end the 1996/7 season 4 per cent up on the previous year.

This year it's a different story. Bulgaria is still doing well: its sales to October this year are up a further 25 per cent on that good 1996/7 result. But so far, this season's star performer is unquestionably France, up 78 per cent.

All these figures come from Terry McCarthy, director of the Holiday Booking Survey (HBS), which is produced by the market research company, ACNielsen. Every month the company surveys 300 high-street travel agents, and monitors the bookings taken on the premises; from this sample it then extrapolates figures for the whole market. Although the HBS does not include direct-sell telephone or electron-

ic bookings, it still reckons to cover 83 per cent of the package-holiday market. And up to the beginning of last month (the most recent period for which complete figures are available), the HBS shows skiing bookings to be a remarkable 41 per cent up on last year and doing twice as well as the winter holiday market as a whole.

As McCarthy points out, all the major ski companies produced their brochures earlier than usual for this 1997/8 season, a continuing trend which has led to some bookings – not many – having been made this month for 1998/9. Last year's final reckoning showed that 36 per cent of the season's bookings had been made by the beginning of October; this year, McCarthy suspects that the figure could be

40 per cent or more. Which means, for one thing, that market shares are less likely to change dramatically from October onwards – unlike last season when, as well as Bulgaria's decline, the USA went from being 33 per cent up at this point to finishing the season 13 per cent down.

So who's doing well so far this year apart from France? Almost everyone: all the major resorts are benefitting from the overall growth in the market. Down amongst the skiing minnows, Finland is surging ahead, with a further 309 per cent increase this year; but Andorra – small in size, not in skiing – has shown the best performance among the big fish, with a 46 per cent increase on last season's impressive figures. The USA has bounced back, too, with a 36 per cent increase year-on-year – despite the fact that many ski-trade insiders have been predicting big problems in the US market because of capacity on charter flights to Denver has expanded dramatically, but the pound has become relatively less valuable against the dollar than against most European currencies.

Austria is doing very well (42 per cent up), as is Switzerland (39 per cent); only Italy is falling behind the market, after a couple of years of dramatic growth, with an increase of only 19 per cent so far this

season. The only real disaster area is Germany. By the beginning of October last year, 240 skiing holidays had been sold there. The figure for this year? There isn't one.

For France this promises to be a great season. Last year, it made a very slow start: the HBS figures show that up to October 1996, only 29 per cent of its bookings for the whole season had been made. By comparison, Italy had done 44 per cent of its business, and the USA 52 per cent. Probably because of its proximity to Britain and the easy access via ferries to Britain and the Channel Tunnel, France continued to sell well through January and February, and was only outperformed (marginally) by a late run from Switzerland in March and April. This year, the new direct Eurostar service from Waterloo to the French Alps will make it even more accessible. If the snow is good, the French slopes will be full this season.

So holidays in France will have to be booked soon. But if you are thinking of going to the Czech Republic or Slovakia, you can relax for a couple of months. Statistics can become addictive; you keep finding interesting stuff – I found, for example, that 129 skiing holidays in the former Czechoslovakia were sold last year. And every single one was booked in the January/February period. Why? I have no idea.

Margaret Breen

SKI TIP

To change the rhythm and intensity of your turning, ski in time with your breathing. Short turns require more air, so breathe more rapidly; for longer turns, inhale and exhale smoothly.

Chris Exall

GREEN CHANNEL

The ideas behind *The Big Issue* – the magazine sold by the homeless – have travelled far. In The Gambia, a magazine called *Concern* is being sold to tourists by beach boys (known as humsters). It gives information about what local people would like tourists to do, so that our holidays are of some benefit to the locals. Adama Bah, a Gambian, set up *Concern* last year after visiting London and talking to a *Big Issue* seller. He has come back to London to attend Reuters' International Network for Street Papers conference this weekend and pick up some tips.

The main aim of publishing the magazine is "as a tool for advocating a fairer and more equitable form of tourism," says Adama. "Gambian people are being crippled by the growth of foreign-owned and all-inclusive tourism. It is crazy – we hardly benefit from tourism at all. Most of the money goes back out of the country. Even our farmers hardly benefit, because so much of the food for tourists is imported."

Concern encourages tourists to step outside their resorts and spend more in the local shops and restaurants. It also explains local worries about tourism, and gives local cultural and tourist information. Importantly, the humsters are provided with employment, many of whom otherwise become "escorts" for foreign women or live a hand-to-mouth existence.

Adama is working with other Gambians to publish an "alternative guidebook" for tourists interested in staying in small-scale, local accommodation and learning about cultural sites off the beaten track. They are also organising community awareness programmes for villages that are directly affected by tourism. In a country where families are often supported on a single wage of £1 a day from hotel work, tourism to The Gambia must change for the better, he says.

"There is nothing idealistic about this – it's the only way out for us. We have to make sure tourism is sustainable and viable for the future. For us, it's pretty much a life or death struggle."

Sue Wheat

RED CHANNEL

Sydney is a city under siege. Not by any foreign invader, but by battalions of builders. So if crane-spotting gets you going, or you have a fetish for foundations, then you're in for a treat. But otherwise you may be in for a disappointment, with a number of city buildings either shrouded in scaffolding or being remodelled.

It is all part of the huge effort to get Sydney ready for the 27th Olympic Games, which start in September 2000. At the moment the city receives 2.5 million international visitors a year. That is expected to leap to 3.6 million around the time of the Olympics, and up to 5.1 million by 2005. And while an estimated A\$2m (about £350,000) per day is being spent on the Olympic site itself at Homebush Park, elsewhere nearly A\$6bn (about £2.5bn) will be spent over the next three years on commercial projects such as hotels and apartments to cope with the influx. Watch out, too, for the great holes of Sydney: 22 of these appeared around the city in the recession of the early Nineties. Developers, having knocked down the existing buildings, couldn't afford to build new ones – and so they were simply left. Incentives are being offered to their owners to build on them, but if these are not taken up they'll be forced to cap the holes and landscape them.

Sydney is still a breathtakingly beautiful place, but until the work is finished it isn't displaying its best side. If you are going before then, when you pack your sun hat, it may be worth slipping a hard one in, too.

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TRAVELPLANNERS

A holiday made of experiences

The Great Wall was there on the mountain tops, decked in mist and threatened with clouds. The problem was that we were not getting any closer to it ... Louise Jury's visit to China coincided with the country's biggest national holiday.

If you have endured the junction of the M4/M5 on a Bank Holiday Monday, this picture the traffic. Double it, then triple it for the full effect around Peking on the day I was there earlier this year. The Chinese, perfectly at home on bicycles, appear to lose all sense of etiquette once in a motorised vehicle. In fact, they lose all sense.

Should you ever expect to be in China on 1 October, adjust your travel plans. The Chinese take their national holiday, a testimony to Chairman Mao and the foundation of the People's Republic, very seriously.

They are building a giant new road towards the Great Wall, one of the world's greatest cultural treasures, but it isn't finished yet. Our coach was squashed in the jam and did not move.

In the cities, the streets throng with holidaying Chinese, many visiting from the countryside, some apparently wearing their blue Chairman Mao suits as if they were Sunday best. Like the Japanese, they want you, the Westerners, to pose alongside them in their holiday snaps. Red flags fly in the streets, red Chinese lanterns hang from pillars and doorways, fairy lights bedeck the trees. Even the police in uniform enjoy a day out, posing in uniform in front of memorials to the appropriate state heroes – Mao and Sun Yat Sen.

And the Chinese are as fascinated by their cultural heritage as we are. Thousands of them take the opportunity of a few rare days off to absorb the beauty of the Summer Palace and the audacity of the Forbidden City. In Tiananmen Square, a thousand plants bloom in pots, bring-

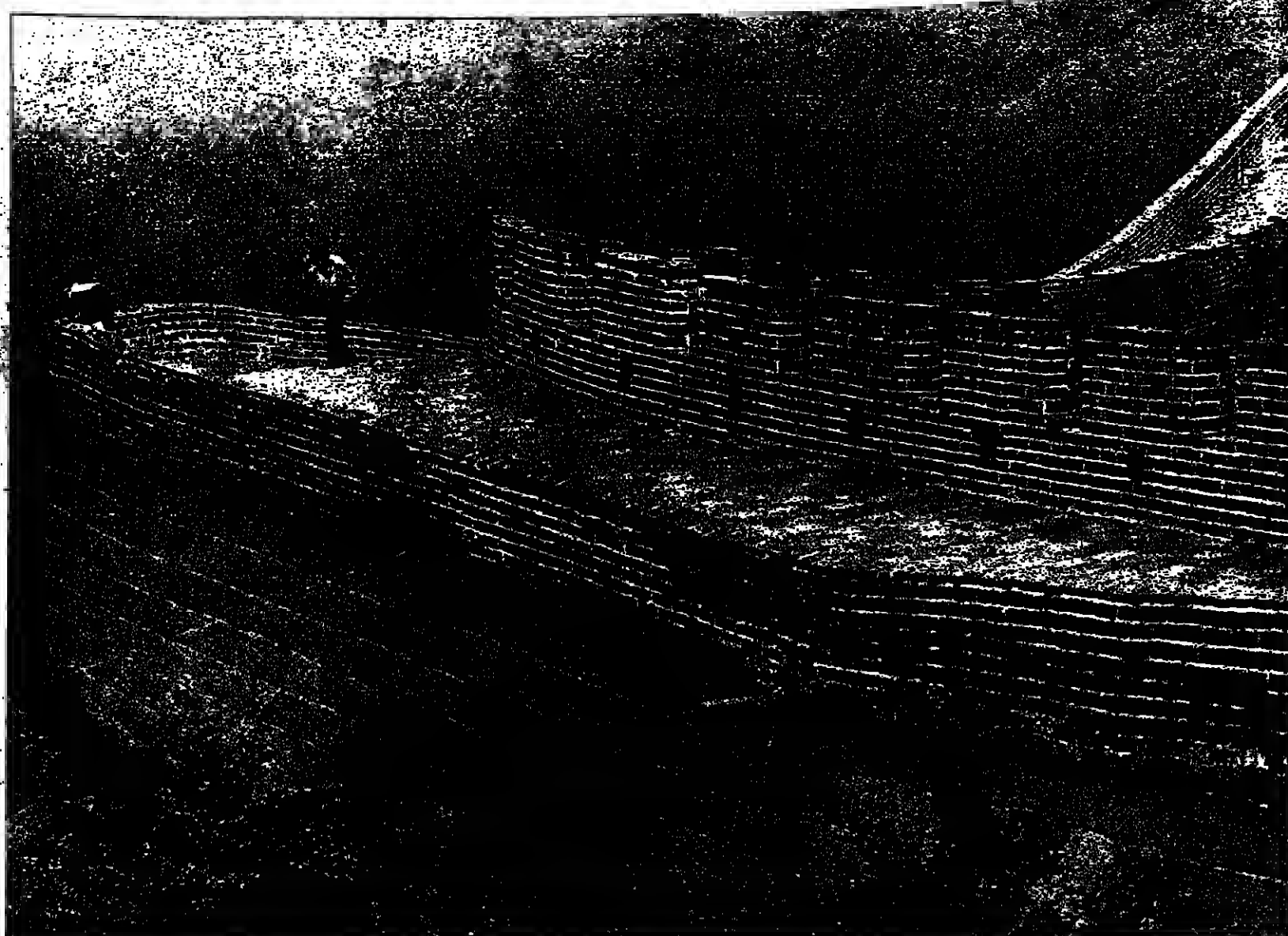
ing a militaristic grandeur and prompting a scatter-gun of camera flashes (though failing to erase the image of a lone protester standing bravely before a tank). Leaving Peking, thousands more head for the jaw-dropping vastness of the Great Wall.

Travelling in a party of 20 or so, we had spent the morning at the Ming tombs in the valley where 13 of the 16 Ming dynasty emperors lie buried. After lunch our organised tour group was cheerful as we travelled onwards to the wall. To the surprise of the local guide, evidently unaccustomed to Western spontaneity, some even burst into song. But after two hours spent barely moving, the prospect began to dawn that there was a risk that the Great Wall of China would remain a snake on the horizon.

Drastic action was taken. Our guide had a quick consultation with the driver and a colleague and decided that some wall was better than no wall. At a key junction, instead of turning left towards Badaling, one of the widest sections, fabled for its capacity to hold five horses prancing abreast, we turned right to a more obscure section. We were there.

Nothing can quite prepare you for the sight of the magnificent fingerprint of man that is the Great Wall. As you stare up from the coach park, it winds and twists steeply towards the sky, the curls round the mountain top and down before rising again. Even here, dozens upon dozens of visitors, mainly Chinese, were puffing their way up knee-challenging steps, clutching the prop of the handrail whenever offered, to look out towards the north and imagine Genghis Khan and his hordes arriving to terrorise the border guards. (In fact, he is supposed to have bribed them to let him in.)

At every tower, a gaggle of visitors would be haggle for a good price over the "I Climbed The Great Wall of China" T-shirts, the guidebooks and the signed certificate of your mountaineering success. There is even a camel to be clambered on and photographed with. But climb far enough, and even on this, arguably the busiest day of the year, the crowds disappear behind you.



The Great Wall of China ... as you won't see it on | October

Photograph: John Voo

The wall has been restored at most of the points where you are likely to arrive. But it is almost more magnificent where it stands crumbling, with scraggy weeds forcing their way between the cracks, but a still solid testament to the builders who began their work in the fifth century BC. It is difficult to comprehend the thinking behind such an astounding attempt to defend China's borders.

As I began the walk back, large, determined spots of rain fell. Figures began to don macs and head for their coaches (nearly all arrive by coach), but there was no mad rush to leave the wall. I guessed that perhaps the majority of visitors would see it only once in their

lives, and intended to make the most of it.

Yet back on ground, the adventure was barely over. If the traffic on the way there was bad, the return to Peking was unbelievable. The worst London roadhogs had nothing on the Chinese. Absolutely no one would give an inch to another driver, even if that meant no vehicle moved. A breakdown caused an impasse that was resolved only when the engine finally decided to function after all. In the absence of any other route, we had to journey home through Badaling, our original destination.

I have never seen so many coaches, not even at Wembley. Hundreds in rows, unmoving, beneath vast walls illuminated as

darkness fell, with fairy lights and spotlights. Compared with the stern majesty we had witnessed earlier, Badaling seemed a Santa's grotto, a tourist creation. Though the sight was impressive, there was general agreement that we had been lucky to see the wall bleak and unadorned.

Once moving, the traffic was terrifyingly reckless, overtaking on blind corners, travelling the wrong way down the other side of the road. The front coach seats, initially much favoured for the view, became tarnished with the horror of watching overtaking cars veer towards the side of the coach in late, desperate bids to avoid the oncoming traffic hurtling towards them. We

arrived back in Peking three-and-a-half hours late, as the national day was drawing to a close. Other parties did not arrive back until even later, at 2am or 3am, when we were already dreaming of overreaching emperors, invading Moogols and Genghis Khan.

A good way to avoid the crowds in China is to travel there in winter; you also benefit from extremely low prices. In January, for example, the China Travel Service (0177-836 9911) is offering fully inclusive nine-day tours based on Peking for £659, including non-stop flights from Heathrow, accommodation, transfers and all meals. The only extra is a visa, costing £24.95.

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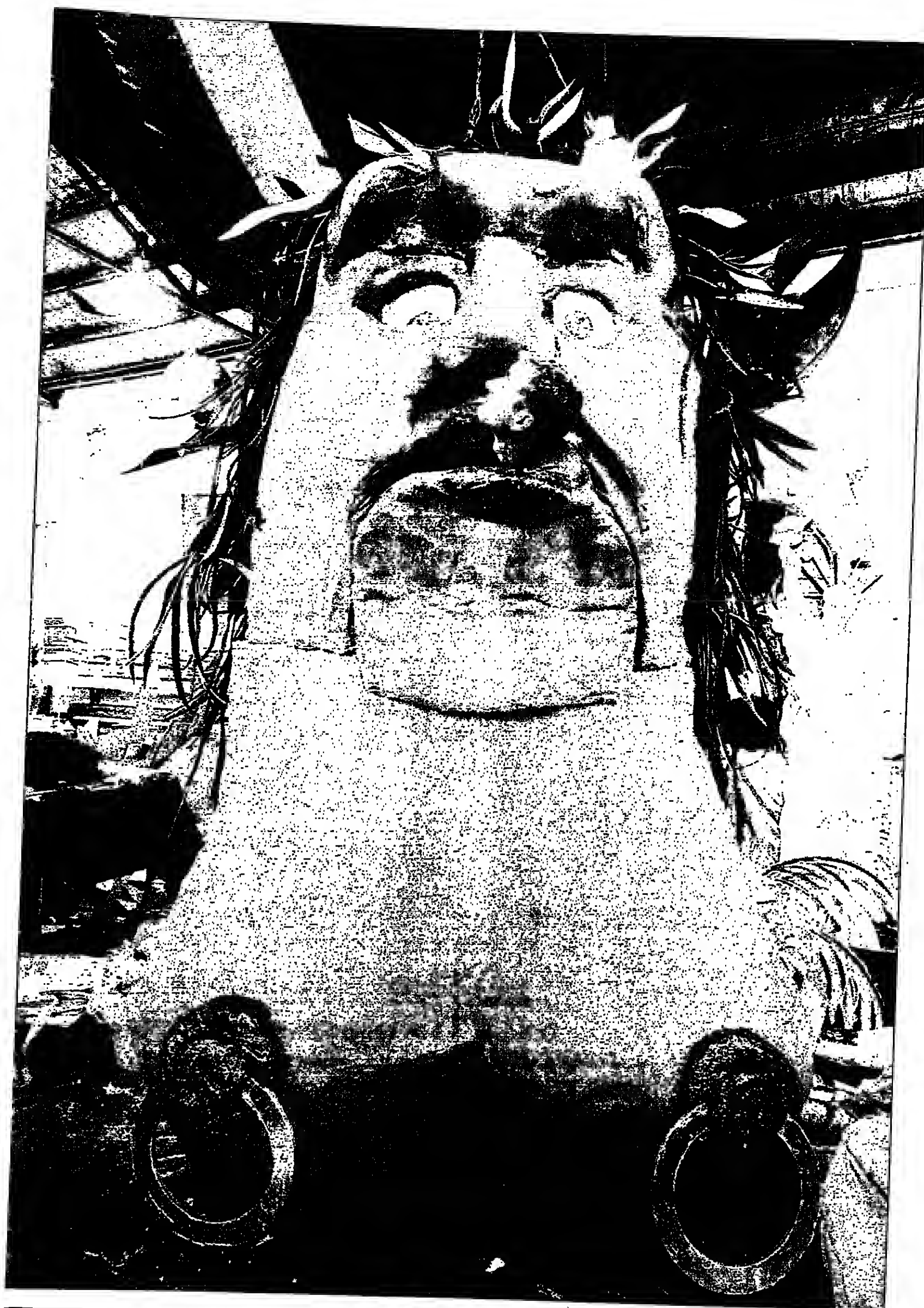
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7/FESTIVALS

THE INDEPENDENT
SATURDAY 29 NOVEMBER 1997
7



Go-go, or no-go?

Festivals often provide the *raison d'être* for travel, showing people and places at their most alluring and exciting. Sometimes, though, they can be a complete pain, making transport overcrowded and spare accommodation non-existent. Simon Calder, Louise Jury and Harriet O'Brien provide a guide to the pains and gains of various festivals around the world.

Destination: Brazil
Event: Mardi Gras
Date: the week up to and including Shrove Tuesday, which falls on 24 February in 1998

The ultimate street party takes place in the nation that lives on the street. For the week building up to the start of Lent, Brazil goes bonkers, with a frenzy of festivities. Some of these are formally organised, notably the huge three-day-long series of parades in Rio, when a dazzling sequence of floats decked with dancers celebrates the virility at the core of Brazil. Elsewhere, "Carnaval" is simply an excuse for reckless indulgence in alcohol, sex and dancing (sometimes, alarmingly, all at once).

Pain/gain ratio: You will not find such an intensity of humanity on any street, anywhere, though the Notting Hill Carnival (below) can come close. Unlike London W11, though, policing seems to be random with a tendency towards non-existence. The thieving classes of Brazil, active at the best of times, enjoy a week of unfettered robbery. People leaving the parade in Rio, at least by the route I took, had no choice but to run a terrifying gauntlet of pickpockets who grabbed at any loose item – and many that were not loose at all. A few days later, in Salvador de Bahia, I was warned by the hotel staff not to venture out while wearing glasses. So, unfortunately, pain outpaces gain. Similar thrills and threats apply at the carnivals in Havana and New Orleans.

Destination: Sydney
Event: Gay Mardi Gras
Date: February (main parade is on the last day)

All month long, Australia's largest city is the venue for a festival of performing arts, sport and community events. Even though Lent is already under way by the end of the month, on 28 February the streets of Sydney's city centre are given over to a ribald and raunchy celebration for lesbians and gay men at a parade more outrageous than in Rio.

Pain/gain ratio: There has been some controversy about whether "straight" people should attend, so heterosexuals may find the experience not altogether comfortable. But gay participants will find it a solid gold (and?) no-pain gain.

Destination: Poland
Event: Easter Sunday
Date: This falls on 12 April in 1998

Poland on Easter Sunday has the unnerving calm of Christmas in Britain 25 years ago. Arriving in Cracow on the Saturday, everywhere is fairly quiet. On the Sunday it feels like not a bird is stirring. The only activity is at every church where, as befits a Catholic country, masses are held almost every hour. Nowhere is open, not even hotel restaurants.

Pain/gain ratio: One visitor ended up in McDonald's for almost the first time in her life. Never was she so grateful for American fast food.

Destination: India
Event: Holi
Date: This falls on 13 March in 1998
The festival of colours is essentially a Hindu event but everyone joins in. People rush around splashing each other with coloured powder, everything (shops, offices, even tourist stalls) closes at least until noon, and as the day progresses so does the rowdiness.

Pain/gain ratio: anyone is fair game. If you go out anywhere you must expect to be quickly covered in red, black and green powder (which takes some time to wash off – wear old clothes). In many areas this is very jolly, but some women tourists have complained about being groped at the same time. It's best to avoid going out later in the day when there's often a high level of drunkenness.

and traffic accidents are frequent in the cities. The real gain during Holi is that, very unusually for India, no one tries to sell you anything.

Destination: Paris
Event: Bastille Day
Date: 14 July
Arriving in Paris on Bastille Day without prior planning is a bad move. And finding an affordable hotel might prove impossible.

Pain/gain ratio: The city is a wonderful backdrop to celebrations. The fireworks which traditionally light the sky over the Eiffel Tower on 14 July are splendid. The firecrackers, which some Parisian youths think it is amusing to throw indiscriminately, are not.

Destination: Notting Hill, west London

Event: Carnival
Date: August bank holiday weekend. Veterans of the Isle of Wight Festival in 1970 always drone on about how that was the highest single-location festival ever, but the three-day thrash in London W11 each August bank holiday is possibly larger. London's Caribbean community is joined by professional partygoers from all over the world, for electrifying music, exciting food and a selection of intoxicating substances.

Pain/gain ratio: these days, very little pain – though no sensible participant risks turning up with much more than T-shirt, shorts and a small, sweaty wad of cash – and much gain.

Destination: England and Wales

Event: Christmas
Date: 25 December, but travellers are affected for several days before and afterwards.

The birth of Jesus is celebrated throughout the Christian world, but in some parts of Britain it is taken as an excuse for a near-total national shutdown. For a week beforehand, public transport is hopelessly overburdened. Then, on Christmas Eve, services are wound down. On 25 December itself, there is virtually no way of getting around without private transport. Most trains take the following day off, too, and many enterprises remain closed until 2 January.

Pain/gain ratio: Any gain to the traveller is difficult to assess, since most events are purely family affairs.

Destination: the Islamic world

Event: Ramadan
Date: variable; this year, probably starting on 31 December and lasting for one lunar month

The month of fasting is never a brilliant time to travel to the Islamic world, since the stress engendered by fasting throughout the hours of daylight can be intense for participants and travellers alike. In some areas non-Muslims are expected to observe the fast, too, while in public, most travellers would, in any event, wish to respect it.

Pain/gain ratio: For non-believers, no gain and plenty of pain. Entire nations can slow down to an ill-tempered crawl. The festival at the end of Ramadan, though, is often a hugely rewarding time in visit – particularly in the Arab world.

Destination: Edinburgh

Event: Hogmanay
Date: 31 December
The city that brought you *Thruway* also supplies the UK's greatest New Year celebration – so successful, that to quote the official guide: "You will need a pass to get into the street party on 31 December from 8pm. Passes are available free from the Hogmanay Box Office by personal application or by post"; the address for both is 21 Market Street, Edinburgh. Much of the city centre will be cordoned off, and part of the A1 closed down, while 300,000 people greet the New Year with music (from the likes of Jah Wobble and Salsa Celtica) and possibly with some assistance from strong liquor, though the official guide solemnly warns that "People under the influence of alcohol may be refused admission."

Pain/gain ratio: Transport links between Scotland and England are full to bursting before and afterwards. But the fun factor here is likely to be much higher than at the parallel event in London's Trafalgar Square.



A time and a place for tourists ... Sydney's Mardi Gras parade, top; Bastille Day in Paris, left; Edinburgh at new year, above
Photographs: David Grey/Michael Ealer

Presents for the future

A partridge in a pear tree won't get you far. The gift for the person who has everything is the world. Fortunately, writes Simon Calder, a veritable globe of travel-related presents can be found.

Bus gift vouchers

The international coach operator Euroline (0990 143219) sells gift vouchers in denominations of £10 and £20 – one of the former and two of the latter would be more than enough for a London-Paris return.

Airline gift vouchers

All right, so airlines don't sell gift vouchers – but they do the next best thing. This is a Miscellaneous Charges Order (MCO), made out in the beneficiary's name to a certain value and exchangeable for air transport. In theory an MCO can be had for as little as £1, though these days that will get you nowhere fast; BA's lowest adult fare is £13, between Westray and Papa Westray in Orkney.

An MCO issued by an Iata airline can be used on other carriers. If the gift proves to be unwanted, then a full refund is possible providing you have paid in cash.

Fear of flying class

If the love of your life refuses to soar to the skies with you, then offer to take the anxiety out of aviation. Aviatours (01252 793250) runs one-day courses based at Heathrow (next one 21 February) and Manchester (28 February).

A senior British Airways training captain and psychologists spend the first part of the day putting fears to rest. The course culminates in a 45-minute "round the houses" flight in a Boeing operated by a specially selected crew. The success rate is 98 per cent. High-priced Heathrow costs £179; moderate Manchester £149.

Keeping to time

Patek Philippe has just launched a new watch that shows two time zones at once, priced in the region of £6,000. The one I use, a Casio, cost £24.99; I'm not my third already, the first two having met untimely ends, but I would need to get through another 397 before a Patek Philippe is justified.

Thomas Cook doesn't exactly offer a gift subscription for its rail schedules, but for £117.60 the company will supply your true love with 12 months of the oldest continuously published train schedule in the world, the European Timetable. Its bi-monthly Overseas counterpart costs £58.80.

Reading matters

The arrival of Condé Nast *Traveller* to Britain's newsstands makes a glossy addition to the range of travel magazines. A year's worth will cost you £32.40, or £38 with three free bottles of wine: call 01858 435359. If you order by 1 December, the subscription will begin with the February edition, published in January; you will be sent a gift card to present to the beneficiary in the meantime.

The more established *Wanderlust* magazine appears bi-monthly. An annual subscription, £15, is available on 01753 620426. *National Geographic* doesn't just offer a

subscription – the recipient receives "A handsome personalised Membership Certificate suitable for framing and a brief illustrated history of the Society". Plus 12 issues, and some excellent maps, for a total of £24. If you write to the National Geographic Society, PO Box 19, Guildford GU3 3BR.

Mixed blessings

The strangest present of the year is "Gate 23", an audio compendium of flight departure announcements at Heathrow airport, compiled on cassette by Jake Tilson, 16 Talford Road, London SE15 5NY (0171-701 3689), for the modest outlay of £6.

8/TRAVEL

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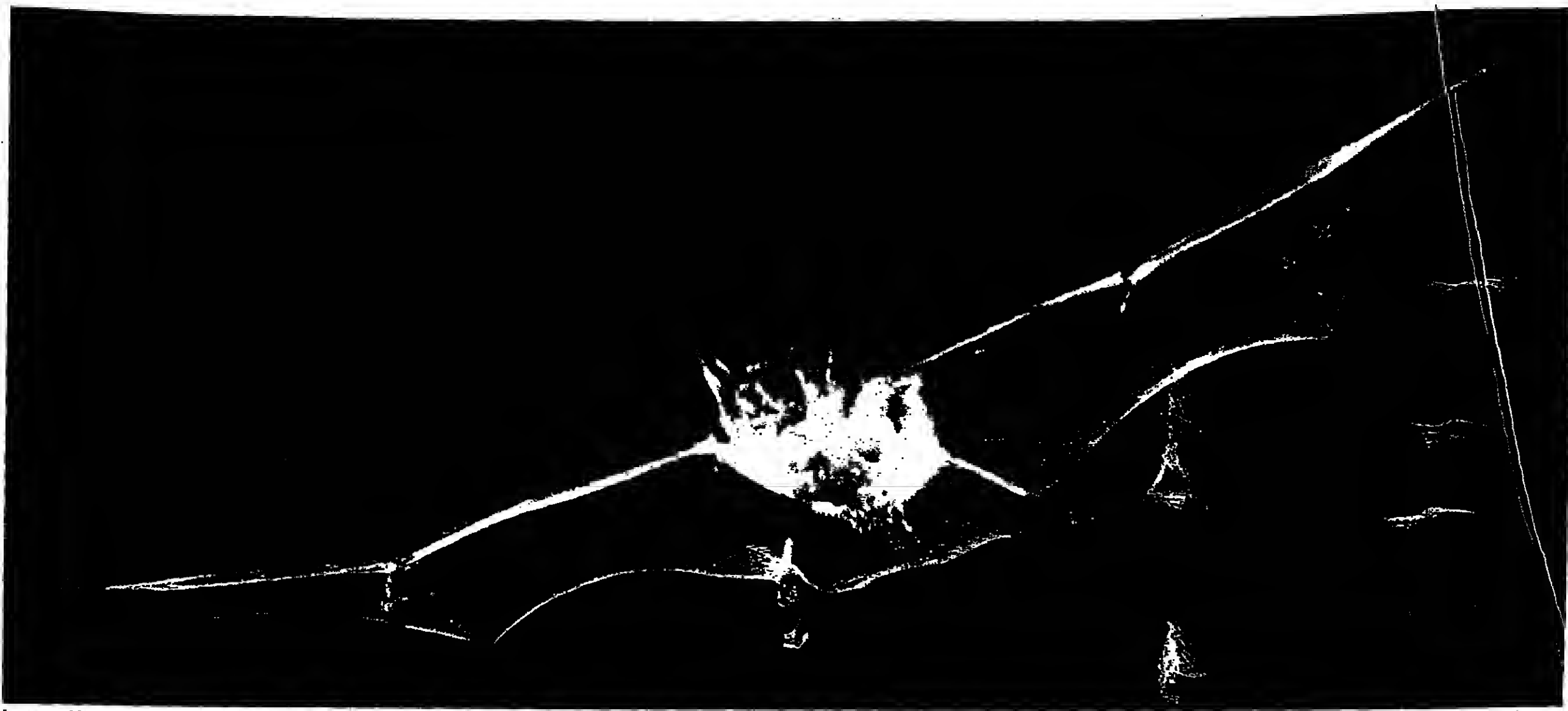
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Insect-seeking missile: bats use ultrasound to detect their prey. The mouse-eared bat, above, is one of the 15 species resident in this county

Photograph: Werner Cuth/Ardea

According to the boffins, it shouldn't have left the ground

Awareness of Britain's bat population is very much improved. But, writes Daniel Butler, there's still much to learn about these strangest of mammals.

"Take a good look at your local bats now. You're not going to see much of them for the next five months: they're going torpid," Chris Thain, of the Radnorshire Wildlife Trust, peers through the narrow window built into the gate closing off a disused railway tunnel on the Giffach Nature Reserve. "I found a natterer's bat settling down here last week," he observes. "It's an ideal hibernation site: humid, frost-free and with a steady temperature."

His interest is indicative of a transformation in our attitudes to the largest but least-known group of British mammals. Given this country's reputation for pioneer zoology, it seems remarkable that until recently bats were almost totally overlooked; the first specialist book on British bats was not published until 1946. It was the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 that really got things going. "This gave protection for the first time," explains Tony

Hudson, senior conservation officer at the Bat Conservation Trust. "There was a huge boost in interest, and dozens of local bat groups were formed almost overnight."

The result was that amateurs began to add significantly to scientific understanding. "Bats used to be considered hard to study but in fact they are easy if you track them down to their roosts—particularly if you use ultrasound," says John Messenger, of the Vincent Wildlife Trusts.

He illustrates the shortfall in knowledge by pointing out that when he started his present job in 1984 there was only one bat species on the Radnorshire mammal list; 10 others have since been discovered. Indeed, it was this sudden interest that led an amateur bat watcher to notice that his local pipistrelles had two ultrasonic call ranges. This was followed by further tests: "They look identical, but DNA testing shows them to be more different than tigers and lions," says Messenger. This means Britain's 14 resident bats will soon become 15, once the newcomer has been formally named and catalogued.

Similarly, it was enthusiasts, such as Ginn Little, of the Penzance Bat Hospital, who noticed that "vagrants" (blown in from Europe by storms), were significant

"A local tree surgeon brought in an immature male *Nathusius pipistrelle*," she explains. "Because it takes two years for these to reach sexual maturity, this meant it must have been born here." Other records soon confirmed that it was relatively widespread: now it's an official migrant.

Although many bats don't hibernate

properly—becoming active during warm spells throughout the winter—most are now becoming torpid at the end of a frenetic autumn spent hunting insects. Those still visible are likely to be this year's youngsters, trying desperately to build up body fat for the lean winter months ahead. However, as temperatures fall and insect numbers

plummet, the animals will spend more and more nights resting in hibernation sites. Abandoned mines, caves and culverts are favoured by most species, but others, such as the noctule, prefer hollow trees.

Such hibernation patterns are probably better understood than bats' mating habits. Although gestation is only three months long, births occur in June. This is thanks to delayed fertilisation, whereby females store and nurture male sperm cells within their bodies through the winter. How they overcome rejection by their own immune systems is still not understood.

The heavily pregnant females also manage to hunt while carrying a fetus that can weigh more than a quarter of their own body weight. Once born, the youngster is raised on the richest milk of any terrestrial mammal and, depending on the species, within three to six weeks it is hunting alongside its mother.

For most people the pipistrelle is much the most likely bat to be encountered. This is mainly because of its fondness for modern buildings. Any bat seen emerging from the eaves on a summer evening is almost certain to be a pipistrelle (although such roosts are abandoned in winter for more thermostatically stable subterranean lairs).

Like all our bats, they are insectivorous, hunting with ultrasound, principally at dawn and dusk, making use of high-frequency echo-location to detect their prey.

Although the principles are now well understood, until recently it was a puzzle how such a tiny creature manages to fly while carrying a powerful echo-location device. This was calculated to be as aerodynamically "impossible" as the flight of the bumblebee, until it was discovered that the same muscles are used for both flight and sound-generation. Even so, scientists still do not fully understand how bats predict when hunting forays will turn up more calories than they produce. Thus, even on a summer evening bats may choose to roost if insects are scarce, yet they may hunt at midday during a mild January. So if your local bats have already disappeared, it is temporary—you may well see them before Easter.

Where to find out more about bats: "Bats" by Phil Richardson (White Books, £7.99) is an excellent general guide. The Bat Conservation Trust produces a free leaflet; send one to 15 Cloisters House, 8 Battersea Park Road, London SW8 4BG. Anyone finding an injured bat should contact the Penzance Bat Hospital, which runs a 24-hour help line (01736-365687).

NATURE NOTE

For anyone who wants to watch wildlife, the most important precept is to keep still. By walking straight through a wood, you clear the ground ahead of you; but if you sit down and remain motionless for a while, you become part of the scenery, and greatly increase your chances of seeing some memorable sight. Out in the country, nothing attracts attention like movement. To a static observer, one flick of a deer's ear will betray the fact that a large animal is standing in a thicket, otherwise unseen. Cats and foxes employ stillness as a form of attack, crouching motionless, and therefore unnoticed, as prey comes into range; but many animals and some birds instinctively use immobility in defence. A pheasant, surprised out in a field, will crouch down and not move a muscle till danger passes. A squirrel disturbed by passing humans runs up a tree, flattens itself on a branch and does not shift again until the coast is clear. To numerous wild creatures, stillness is salvation.

Duff Hart-Davis

'The punters are surging up and down the aisles like spring tides'

The setting: a huge Christmas fair near Malmesbury. The challenge: to sell copies of your own book. The technique: think of yourself salmon-fishing...

Without raising my head I can see a woman steering straight for our table. A day and a half at this game have taught me that timing is vital.

It's exactly the same as salmon-fishing: when you feel a fish take your fly, every instinct tells you to strike—but in fact what you must do is wait. So, now, I tell myself, do not look up too soon. Here she is, in front of our left-hand show-card. I raise my head and give a glowing smile.

Waste of time and effort. The woman—a large, middle-aged person wearing a dark-green cardigan and skirt—is glaring sideways at the card with an air of incomprehension. I see her lips mouthing the title of my book—*When the Country Went to Town*. "What's it about?" she barks, in a sharp baritone.

"Well—the countryside marches, and the rally in Hyde Park on 10 July."

"Is it any good?"

What the hell is the answer to that? After rapid sifting of various alternatives—"Brilliant!", "Rubbish"—I come up with the feeble "Not a lot!"

She grabs a copy and glares again. Just as I am gloomily deciding she has no interest in country affairs, she suddenly says, "All right—I'll have five."

Five copies at once! Ye gods—a bonanza. A peep into the customer's bag reveals that it is stuffed with £20 notes. My publisher, David, takes her money while I scribble five signatures on the title pages—and then we both eagerly scan the crowd for more of her ilk.

The scene is one of the Christmas fairs run by that redoubtable organiser, Mary Howard. To have yellow AA signs made out simply with your name on them, you must

be a big cheese—and she is: by her own efforts she has raised some £350,000 for charity, and her fairs make £50,000 a year for charitable causes. So the road signs say simply "Mary Howard", funneling fans into Hullavington airfield, near Malmesbury.

The fair is in one of the hangars: an amazing structure about 300ft long, nothing but a gracefully curved roof, which sweeps right down to ground level on either hand. Inside, the press of punters is terrific: wild-eyed, and 98 per cent female, they surge up and down the aisles like spring tides. When word comes round that today alone

DUFF HART-DAVIS

nearly 3,000 have paid the £4 entrance fee, I can well believe it.

But how does one engage their attention? Jump up and down? Gesticulate? Shout? Smirk? Look the other way? Gripe like an ape? Stand up? Sit down?

Professional shopkeepers doubtless have their methods, but for a beginner, the uncertainty is hell. David has a theory that it is essential to keep our table well stacked with piles of copies—a state of play which (a cynic might remark) is all too easy to maintain.

My mind wanders to the disused airfield outside. I keep thinking how, over in East Anglia, the Thurlow Hunt has just won a major conservation award for its rehabilitation of a Second World War bomber base: there, volunteer workers have broken up the old runways and returned the land to grass, corn and trees. Will that ever happen here at Hullavington? Or will the vast, level expanse be used for houses, in preference to more scenic areas, as many people feel it should?

Look out, though. Concentrate. Here comes an obvious countryman: red face, hefty build. He takes one look at the book and says, "I should think that's pretty boring."

For a moment I am speechless. Then I come back with, "It's fairly light, anyway."

Bright blue eyes fasten on me. "In fact," I blunder on, "it's so light you more or less have to hold it down to read it."

No spark of amusement softens that stare. Off he goes, clearly with the impression that I am crazy.

Feeling in need of a stiff whisky, I mutter to David: "No more jokes! And square up to a girl of about 16. Even if she is penniless, at least she has a lively face."

"Where you at the rally?"

"Of course!"

"And on one of the marches?"

"The day from Stow-on-the-Wold."

"Great!"

Immediately she buys a copy for her boyfriend. "He was in Hyde Park," she says, "so please write something really rude in it."

"What—like 'Up yours'?"

"Not as rude as that."

She settles for "Mark—Where were you?" Then suddenly she says, "Oh, look. I need two more." She pays cash, professes herself delighted, and is gone. With time to study the throng, we notice the same people coming past again and again. They are in slow orbit, searching for Christmas presents with ever-increasing desperation. Several raise my hopes by veering in towards us, but then cry out: "Where's the canteen?"

By 5.30pm, after seven hours on duty, I have had enough. I decide I am not cut out for selling.

Napoleon famously dismissed England as "une nation de boutiques". But did he realise what physical stamina shopkeepers need, to stand around all day; what mental reserves they must have, to combat lack of trade, boredom and insults? I salute them—even if, at the same time, I am profoundly glad that my stall behind the counter is over.

SOMETIMES IT'S EASIER TO TALK TO SOMEONE YOU DON'T LIKE



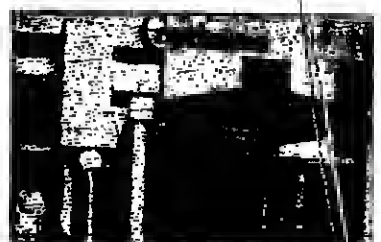
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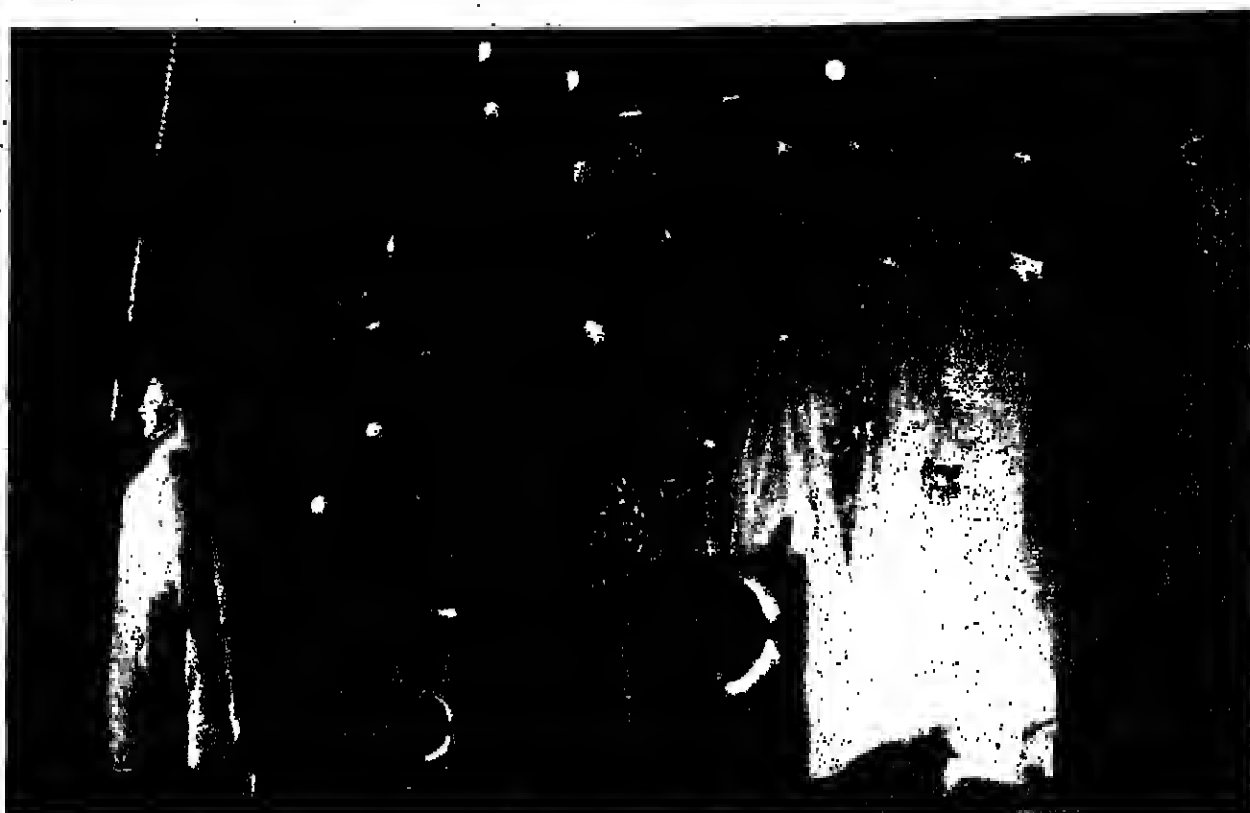
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All Independent readers are eligible for a special rate of £45 per person for an overnight break at the Copthorne Coquelle Calais. Price includes one night bed & breakfast & return Le Shuttle ticket based on two in a car, valid until 23/12/97. To book call Le Shuttle Holidays on 0990 353535 and quote "The Independent Promotion". Prices are based on two people sharing a room. A limited number of rooms are available.

Call now 563 per person at 18 times. Winner picked at random after last date 29 November 1997. Local Newspaper Publishing rules apply. Editor's decision is final.

10/OUTINGS



Spectacular variety: the Thursford Christmas show is billed as Britain's biggest

Photograph: Bryn Coulton

The great Christmas barn bonanza

Britain's biggest Christmas spectacular takes place in a tucked away village. Louise Duffield went to the opening night.

If someone asked where in this country you could find the largest Christmas show, few would suggest a venue outside of London. There would be even fewer who would suggest Norfolk. And if anyone said "in a museum barn in a remote village", then it could only mean one thing - that they'd already been privileged to see one of Thursford's Christmas Spectaculars. Billed as the largest Christmas production in England, the Thursford Spectacular is quite some festive sight. But what is all the more remarkable about the show is that it is staged in an enormous barn which, for the rest of the year, is home to a collection of steam engines, organs and fairground memorabilia.

The Thursford Christmas Spectacular started as a small-scale concert 20 years ago and has become so popular that every show is a sell-out, and visitors travel from all over the country to see it.

It is the variety of the Thursford event that is unique; nowhere else can you see such a combination of choirs, singers, dancers and musicians. The organist from the Tower Ballroom, Blackpool, sits alongside musicians from the band of the Prince of Wales's Division (Lucknow) on the programme, while the Thursford Dancers put their interpretation on such pieces as "Lord of the Dance", "Rockin' all over the World" and "Dance of the Snowmen". The St Nicholas Choir, a bagpiper and a harpist are also vital parts of the production, not to mention the live turkey, basket of ferrets and dove flypast.

It takes three weeks to turn the home of The Thursford Collection into a sparkling winter wonderland of glitter, tinsel and lights. The barn itself contains 20 steam engines, a magnificent, 100-year-old fairground gondola switchback ride, a mighty Wurlitzer organ, and a host of musical fairground organs. A further 30 engines are awaiting restoration.

The seed that was to grow into this unique collection was planted when the founder George Cushing, now 94, visited a traditional fairground as a boy. He was

amazed and bewitched by the steam engines, which sparked off a life-long passion for the huge, hissing objects. As a young man he saved every penny he had and bought a second-hand traction engine, and worked as a contractor. He still has that machine - and dozens of others, which he saved from the scrapheap so that future generations could live the age of steam. The love of steam engines brought Mr Cushing into contact with mechanical fairground organs, which he soon began adding to his collection. Then came the beautiful 19th-century Gondola switchback fairground ride, built in the Norfolk factory of the merry-go-round creator Frederick Savage. Today it is powered by electricity for convenience, but in its heyday it ran on steam.

But one of the most popular attractions at Thursford is undoubtedly the Wurlitzer organ - formerly housed in a Leeds cinema and the fourth largest in Europe with 1339 pipes. Resident organist Robert Wolfe gives regular afternoon concerts.

The visitors
Sharon Lloyd, an office clerk, went to the Thursford Collection's Christmas Spec-

tacular with her son Adam, 12, and daughter Nicola, eight.

Sharon: This is probably the fifth time that I have been to one of Thursford's Christmas shows, and I still think it is so magical. I keep coming back because to me it sums up Christmas. It has something to appeal to most ages, because the show switches from serious music by the choir to humorous geese strutting around the stage. If you don't like one thing, then you don't have to wait long before something different appears on stage.

I think it would be well worth going to visit Thursford when the Christmas decorations are down, and the regular attractions are on display.

Adam: I thought the show was great. There was a lot of singing and dancing, and there were animals and everything involved. My favourite bit was the last bit, where the balloons came down and the doves flew past.

The first time I saw the Christmas decorations, I thought they were very good. I liked the shops because they sold a wide variety of things. I bought a badge. Some


people of my age wouldn't like the Christmas show because they are into rave. I have seen steam engines at the Royal Norfolk Show and I thought they were quite good, so I may like to come back and have a look at the ones they have at Thursford.

Nicola: I thought it was brilliant because it was fun and exciting, and the songs were good. It was very colourful and the decorations were lovely. I had loads of favourite parts, but I especially liked the song "Santa Claus is Coming to Town", and when they were doing "Lord of the Dance", and the bagpipes. I had never seen any bagpipes before. I hope I can go again. I bought some flashing Christmas tree earrings in the shop.

The deal
The Thursford Christmas Show is staged at the Thursford Collection, Thursford Green, Thursford, near Fakenham, Norfolk (01328 878477). There are two shows every day, at 2.30pm and 7pm, until 23 December, but the only tickets available are cancellations. Bookings for next year's spectacular, from 12 November to 23 December, are taken in writing from 5 January.

The museum collection is open from noon until 5pm from Good Friday to 25 October, with live musical shows daily from the mechanical organs and the Wurlitzer. **Admission:** This year's ticket price for the show is £12.50, or £11.25 for the party rate. Next year it will be £13, or £11.75 per person for groups of 15 or more. Under-eights are not admitted. Admission to the museum collection is £4.50 for adults, £4.20 for senior citizens, £3.75 party rate and students, £2 for children four to 14, and under-fours free. **Access:** Accessible for wheelchairs and pushchairs everywhere. **Toilets and baby-changing:** Clean, several of them, but quite crowded at times. Baby-changing facilities in the toilet for the disabled.

Shops: Three, well-stocked with good quality gifts and locally-made items, but, again, quite crowded at times. **Catering:** Several different options, including ice-cream parlour, café and tea-room. A picnic area outside, near the adventure playground. **Education:** School trips available, helping with modern history and steam.



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Win a photographic assignment and £1,000 of Nikon equipment

A picture could be worth a thousand pounds - but only if you're quick about it. Each Saturday, our travel pages carry thousands of words designed to inform and inspire the traveller, whether of the armchair or adventurer variety. We also use a few good photographs. Our belief that there are many other excellent amateur photographers out there was confirmed last year, when *The Independent* joined forces with *Wanderlust* magazine to stage our first Travel Photograph of the Year competition. The quality of the entries was outstanding.

So this year, we have expanded the competition to four categories: the Natural World, Action, Face-to-Face and Black & White. We have also brought in one of the most famous names in photography - Nikon, the camera of choice for many of the 1996 entrants.

The top 40 entries will be displayed at Destinations '98, the travel exhibition to be held at London's Olympia

from 26 February to 1 March next year.

The winner will earn a package of valuable prizes, including one that money can't buy: a photographic commission from *The Independent*.

Nikon will provide the winner with an F70 SLR with 24-120mm AF-D lens - worth more than £1,000 - while Bellingham will provide a 335 camera bag and Ventile photo vest (total value £300 plus).

The three winners of the other categories will each receive a Nikon F50 with 35-80mm lens, plus a Bellingham Photo Hadley bag.

You can enter at any time before the end of the year, but take the first step now by writing in for an application form, which includes the competition rules.

The address is *Wanderlust* (Photo of the Year), PO Box 1832, Windsor SL4 6YP. Alternatively, you can complete the form in the new edition of the magazine, which went on sale this week, price £2.80.

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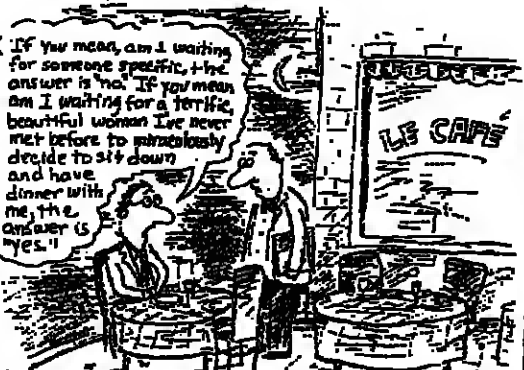
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ANY SINGLES LEFT?
Female, 20, odd one out amongst couples, seeks genuine, outgoing, fun, for friendship/romance. Stuffs 23739

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Tall, fit, slim, GSOH, seeks intelligent, slim lady, up to 5'10", for fun and friendship. 23739

SEEKING MR RIGHT
Attractive, Catholic, warm-hearted, home-loving, single female, 30s, seeks a successful, professional, Christian male, 40s, for a long-term relationship. 23739

CALLING
Female, thoughtful, sometimes challenging, always optimistic and interested in life. Enjoys cycling, hiking and my work. 23739

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Elegant, funny, adventurous, well-travelled, professional female, 30s, seeks a successful, professional male, 40s, for a long-term relationship. 23739

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Professional, fit, presentable, articulate, sociable male, 40s, seeks a special lady, to share his life. 23739

GOOD-LOOKING
South West, good-looking, quiet, fun, creative and solvent, single male, 30s, seeks a companion, 30-40, for companionship. 23739

TRAVELLER RETURNS
Attractive, slim, brunette female, 20s, enjoys singing, dancing, socialising, pub, cinema, some, professional, outgoing, affectionate male, 30s, 35, 40, for friendship, possible romance. 23739

THE USUAL SUSPECT
Professional male, 40s, seeks a special lady, for romance. 23739

DEFINITELY NO ANORAK
Professional male, 40s, seeks a special lady, for romance. 23739

BRIGHT AND LIVELY
You will be 45-52, graduated, man of reason, sophisticated in some ways, lively, active, intelligent, 40s, who enjoys life, for a lasting relationship. 23739

LITTLE MISS HAPPY
Are you 30s, fit, slim, fun-loving, independent, solvent, 30-35, 37, would like to hear from you. 23739

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Attractive, slim, brunette female, 20s, enjoys singing, dancing, socialising, pub, cinema, some, professional, outgoing, affectionate male, 30s, 35, 40, for friendship, possible romance. 23739

DEFINITELY NO ANORAK
Professional male, 40s, seeks a special lady, for romance. 23739

CONFIDE IN ME
Bubbly, mature, slightly eccentric, down-to-earth female, 30s, 35, 40, into life, working, professional, good sense, seeks handsome, solvent male, 30-40, for friendship/romance. 23739

LIVELY AND ADVENTUROUS
Single female, 40s, enjoys travel, socialising, 40s, who enjoys life, for a lasting relationship. 23739

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Professional male, 40s, seeks a special lady, for romance. 23739

CONFIDE IN ME
Bubbly, mature, slightly eccentric, down-to-earth female, 30s, 35, 40, into life, working, professional, good sense, seeks handsome, solvent male, 30-40, for friendship/romance. 23739

LIVELY AND ADVENTUROUS
Single female, 40s, enjoys travel, socialising, 40s, who enjoys life, for a lasting relationship. 23739

TRAVELLER RETURNS
Attractive, slim, brunette female, 20s, enjoys singing, dancing, socialising, pub, cinema, some, professional, outgoing, affectionate male, 30s, 35, 40, for friendship, possible romance. 23739

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12/CHRISTMAS GIFT GUIDE

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13/GARDENING

THE INDEPENDENT
SATURDAY 29 NOVEMBER

WORKSHOP

Trench warfare in the heart of Essex

How do you make a feature out of a ditch? In her regular advice column Anna Pavord comes to the rescue of the Cooper family.

We moved to this much smaller house 18 months ago, simply to gain a bigger garden. The garden is a strange shape, not very long, but extremely wide. Our longest boundary is a ditch about 4ft deep. You could call it a stream if you felt ambitious. I have strong ideas for most of the garden, but the ditch stumps me. At the moment the banks are covered in about 80 per cent nettles. The other side of the ditch is open farmland, with several mature trees.

I have considered a fairly wild and natural look (minus the nettles), but I also like the thought of large-leaved plants such as gunnera and castor oil plants making a tunnel for the children to explore. My main concern is that the ditch dries up in the summer, and I have no idea what plants, if any, will stand being very wet all winter and dry all summer. I also feel that I may have to work in a small area at a time, replanting as soon as I have got rid of the nettles. In some places, where I have tried spraying off the nettles with glyphosate and digging them up, the stream banks have eroded. Can you give us some advice?

Eve Cooper, aged 36, moved last year with her husband, Paul, and their three boys to a brick-built cottage, the middle one of a terrace of three overlooking farmland in the flat, rich countryside near Saffron Walden in Essex. Their garden spreads well behind all three cottages, bounded by the problematical ditch. There are about 63 yards of it, curving round the boundary. Ditches are made for a reason, and any planting would have to take account of the fact that the area might be submerged. My feeling, though, looking at the amount of leaf litter that had accumulated along the bottom of this ditch, was that it was much drier now than it had been in the years after it was made, at least a century ago.

Because the ditch represented the buffer zone between garden and land-

scape, the planting needed to be sympathetic to both - a kind of transition zone. It was impractical to garden the whole 63 yards intensively, but the area naturally fell into three different territories.

About halfway along the boundary, where it faced the back of the cottage, Ms Cooper had made a long flowerbed butting on to the ditch's top edge. The ditch behind could make a backdrop for the bed, filled with gardenesque plants such as gunners, rhubarb with tall spires of rhubarb flowers, purplish-leaved eupatorium, filipendula, staggery-flowered inula, and ligularia. A powerful physique is what she should look for in her "ditch" plants, heavyweights that she can leave to slug it out for 10 rounds against resurgent nettles and other undergrowth.

The sections either side of this central zone could be wilder in style, planted with alder, elder, willow, dogwood and other plants to echo the mood set by the few remnants of native trees and shrubs. A willow and a big field maple grow there, both pollarded, and blackthorn, wild cherry and sycamore.

On the left-hand side of the central area, where the ditch curves past the Coopers' newly planted orchard, I would thicken up the boundary on the far side of the ditch with trees such as the cut-leaf alder, *Alnus incana* 'Laciniata'. This survives manfully in areas that are both cold and wet. As the ditch follows the east boundary of the garden, more cover and shelter would be welcome in winter. The cut-leaf alder, with foliage deeply divided into toothed lobes, would meld imperceptibly with the true natives, but at the same time would have half its heart in the garden it faced.

More willows would work well along the far boundary, too, as much for the cheering sight of their winter twigs as their elegant summer foliage. I'd continue to pollard them, once they were big enough to take it. It is a traditional technique, and the bark on the new growth produced as a result of the cutting back has a much brighter colour than old wood. *Salix alba* 'Britzensis' is one of the best, with orange stems glowing deeper and richer as winter days get colder and bleaker.

But how are the plants to be got into the ground, given the present thick blanket of nettle? And where exactly should they be planted? Not at the very bottom of the ditch. That should be left clear, for winter water (if it comes) and for Jo (11), Ben (eight) and Charlie (two) to take over if they want, in summer. One of the reasons the Coopers decided last year to move their family from their tidy house in Cambridge was in giving them the kind of wild, free, country childhood that Eve Cooper had herself.

City-born Paul Cooper is not into gardening, but he had the inspirational idea of giving eight hours' worth of a man with a spade to his wife as a birthday present. The best present she's ever had, says Eve Cooper. She's the greatest digaholic I've ever encountered, and had already dug by hand the entire area where the fruit trees (another birthday present) are now planted.

But digging is not the answer in the steep-sided terrain of the ditch. On the far side, strimming round the existing trees would reveal enough of the life of the land to plant alders and willows. If the Coopers planted standard trees, on 4-ft stems, their heads (trees), not Coopers' would already be above the danger zone.

On the nearside bank, the weedkiller glyphosate will eventually control the nettles, but the bank will erode if Eve Cooper then tries to pull out the roots. Easier to leave them be, dig out planting holes where they are needed and mulch the rest of the area with grass cuttings, or fairly coarse woodchip mulch, that won't slide immediately down the bank.

She's right in thinking she should tackle one patch at a time. This is how I gradually brought the bank on my garden under control, although it took me 12 years. The

weeds need to be properly killed before you plant and I found that not digging was the key. If you dig, you bring a whole new seed-bank of weed to the surface. You also destabilise the soil. If the areas either side of the central area were treated as "wild" areas, then plantings of shrubs such as dogwoods, fancy-leaved elders and shrubby willows would be entirely appropriate.

It will probably take the whole of next year to get on top of the nettles but by this time next year, Ms Cooper could be planting dogwoods such as *Cornus alba* 'Elegantissima', the lovely, purplish-brown-stemmed shrubby willow *Salix hastata* 'Wehrhahnii' and the elegant elder *Sambucus nigra laciniata*. The willow has wonderful woolly white catkins; the elder has the wide, white flowerheads of the hedgerow elder, but leaves 100 times more handsome. While these areas are get-

ting established, Ms Cooper can be using lists of plants for the grand stational area which should be lush, jung composed mainly of plants with leaves. The biggest plants, such as gunnera, should be planted towards the bottom of the ditch; smaller ones, such as hosta, towards the top.

A trip to the canal garden at Beth Chatto's home would give her an idea of what to do. Beth's garden is a place where leaves like enormous horse ches big, tough clumps of day lilies, *Hebe* flag iris and cabbagey clumps of the flowered *Senecio smithii*. Perhaps Cooper might arrange a visit for his next birthday present.

Beth Chatto Gardens, Elmstead Rd, Colchester, Essex, open in winter, 9am-4pm, admission £2.50.



Ditch dilemma: the Coopers' garden is bounded by a trench that is wet in winter but dry in summer

Photograph: Andrew Bu

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: furnishings to clothes and wall hangings, silk painting is extremely popular. Sally Staples joins a course to learn how.

are 10 of us sitting around a large farm-kitchen table tucking into a selection of niche, salads, fruit and home-made cake eating away like old friends. The scenario that you might expect in a conventional education class. Although the pupils – all 11 on this particular course – have signed up to learn silk painting, they also have the chance to relax and make friends in homely surroundings set deep in the Wye valley. The centre is residential, using all the facilities of a country house.



the converted old Edwardian coach as though it were home. Others, who cally, join the art centre's five-day for just a day or two. Anyone, says tutor sh, can enjoy learning the techniques painting. There is no need to be cre- talented. There is no pressure to and there are plenty of laughs.

uy Self from Alcester has drawn a design rait a silk tie for her son's Christmas . His name she admits coyly is Will. Will iewhow it is hard to imagine the y's novelist wearing a silk tie designed

She has set up her tie on a frame and is outlining the design with a "gutta" which is similar to the masking fluid used in watercolour. Because Will has just moved house, she has designed the tie with dozens of tiny houses becoming progressively smaller as the tie narrows. Once the outlining is complete, she can colour them with water-based paint and once dry they are fixed by ironing.

large rectangular piece of silk which she will turn into a scarf, or possibly a wall hanging. The silk is stretched across a frame to keep it in place and Rachel has outlined a selection of leaves entertained with flowers and butterflies. Now she is having fun with a selection of rich colours, mixing greens and blues and reds and progressing at great speed.

"I did art A-level and my mother has done a bit of silk painting so I thought I'd have a go. The course is brilliant and Liz gives us some useful tips to create special effects."

One of these is to dampen the silk, paint it with your chosen colours and then sprinkle salt over the pattern while still wet. When the paint has dried the salt can be shaken off and leaves behind a mottled effect.

Brenda Clough, from North Somerset, has chosen to paint an autumn scene on her piece of silk, and the skill with which she produces slender leaves and twirling vines indicates that she is not a beginner. Brenda has worked with

watercolours before and admits this helps with silk painting...

Also on the course is a granddaughter and granny team who have never tried silk painting before. Nine Stanford, 23, a website designer who lives locally, persuaded her granny Dorothy to visit the arts centre and try one of the courses. Dorothy, on holiday from Cheshire, is delighted with what she has achieved in such a short time.

She bought some padded silk spectacle cases from tutor Liz and has painted them with floral ecstasies. "I'm not much of an artist but I copied some pictures of flowers and I don't think they've come out too badly," she said. Nina has painted a variety of design on silk bowties as Christmas presents and is now working on a large scarf decorated with flowers and leaves. She has cut out the flower shapes, pinned them to the silk and then outlined them with the gutta before choosing what colours to paint them.

Liz emphasizes to her students that any mistakes made on the silk are not reasons to panic. "Use your mistakes," she charges her pupils. "You can often turn them into something quite interesting. I use water-based solvent free paints and I bring a selection on the course so that students can buy what they need if they are beginners. There is so much on the market that it does help to get some guidance on the products."

Meanwhile, the informality of the Wyke Valley Arts Centre makes it very popular. Director Valerie Welham tells the story of one young student who felt so at home that, feeling a little peckish, he popped down to the kitchen in the early hours of the morning and devoured half the chicken casserole that had been made for the following day's lunch.

A five-day silk-painting course for residential students at the Wyke Valley Arts Centre costs £280 which includes full board and tuition fees. For further information on this and other courses contact Valerie Welham at The Old Coach House, Mork, St Briavels', Lydney, Gloucestershire GL15 6QH (01291 689463) or 01955 530214; website: www.wyartmcenail.com or e-mail: wyart@mcenail.com. Liz Nash can offer further advice on silk painting (01794 301217) and also teaches evening classes at Romsey School, Greatbridge, Romsey, Hants (01794 522106).



Special effects: Liz Nash's silk-painting course is creative, fun and sociable

AN O'BEIRNE RANELAGH
N'T JUNK IT - USE IT

sek, we are going to do some origami
 o make it easier, we shall not be
 ing with those tiresome diagrams that
 ap-erfold-ing so cumbersome.
 t with a square of paper with sides of
 lin long. Now, to make the
 tions easier to follow, mark the
 A, B, C and D (in that order), the
 ts of the sides E, F, G and H (with
 een A and B, F between B and C
 id the centre O. (Find the centre by
 in half and unfolding, first side to
 en top to bottom.) Copy the letters
 he back, in case you lose them.
 old B and D to meet in the centre, O.
 Rease the line AO backwards.
 ow comes the difficult hic bring A
 O, folding on the crease that you
 st made to bring H, E and F
 r. You should now have a flat

square shape, with a triangle on top.

4. Turn your attention to the corner where A and C meet, and fold the small triangular portion (including the A corner) up inside the pocket above it. A should now be tucked up with B, D and O.
5. Fold up C into the same pocket to lock the previous flap in place. You are now left with a triangular pocket, with a smaller triangle surmounting it.
6. Fold the top triangle not quite all the way into the top pocket, leaving it sticking out by a few millimetres.
7. Turn the paper over, and that's it.

Oh, you want to know what it is, do you? Well I'll tell you. What you have made is a neat little bookmark with a tab. Carry it with you at all times, slip it over the corner of the page when you stop reading, and dog-eared books will be a thing of the past.

It was the chap with the silly name, in the hotel near Windsor, with the bit piece of lead piping. Or it might have been the PR chap from Waddingtons, with the mobile phone, in the bar.

Today, at the Oakley Court Hotel near Windsor, Britain's first official Cluedo Convention is taking place to raise money for the charity Children With Leukemia.

They began yesterday, with playlets, unusual identification parades and odd challenges as well as normal Cluedo games, all to determine who wins the first prize of a murder mystery trip on the Venice Simplon Orient Express.

Cluedo, for anyone who does not know it, is a board game of logical deduction. It starts with a man, Dr Black,

having been murdered. Cards indicate who killed him, in what room, and with which weapon, are hidden in an envelope. The other cards are distributed among the players who may gain information by asking questions of each other in turn, while moving their pieces, according to dice throws, round a flat-plan of the mansion in which the murder took place.

Invented by Anthony Pratt, a Leeds solicitor's clerk, in 1946, Cluedo has now sold well over 100 million sets around the world. It has also inspired a film and a television series. The present event, however, is the first to offer bonus points to any entrant who shares a name with any of the Cluedo characters. My money's on Colonel Mustard.

James Dyson, 50, inventor and manufacturer of the Dyson bagless vacuum cleaner

I play Monopoly, but without much enjoyment. It's a hit tedious going round the board and acquiring things. More fun when everybody's going bankrupt and you start borrowing money or negotiating properties with people in lieu of rent. When you're doing something with another person, it stops being a matter of luck. I'd like to get straight into that, and forgo throwing the dice and moving round the board.

I think Monopoly is a game you play in your late teens and early twenties, and it always mirrors later life in some way. There are people who haven't looked at the long term. They accumulate, then run out of cash because they haven't bought any buildings, and they land on people who've mortgaged themselves to the hilt to build hotels.

Some people like trains and always buy the stations, but they're just being romantic,

because it's an hotel on the red or yellow squares which will crucify the other players.

I've always thought it's a mistake to buy Mayfair and Park Lane because they're frightfully expensive and you've only got two to land on. Whereas if you've blocked off a corner with the red and orange sets, people will land on you every single time.

That's the fun of it for me: getting the strategy right and thinking for the long term. I've always done that, and I'll mortgage myself to the hilt in order to get something valuable. The stations will get you a little money in the short term, but the winners are always the people with the swanky hotels.

In a way, I dread playing. I have to make investments and negotiate with people in my everyday life. In the evenings, the last thing I want is a kind of repetition with Monopoly.

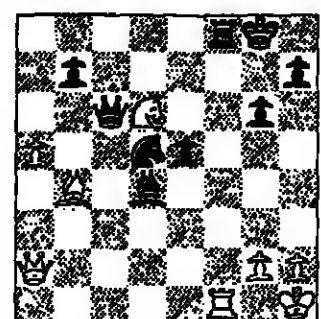
Loose Monopoly money may be swept up with a Dyson bagless vacuum cleaner. Read all about it, and its inventor, in James Dyson's "Against the Odds" (Orion Books, £18.99).

an you tell a human
 not a computer?
 Alan Turing proposed
 the "Turing Test" for
 to intelligence his
 was clearly on too
 d a plane to encompass
 of people cheating in
 simultaneous display.
 idea was to have an
 nter asking questions
 respondents, one
 , one machine. If the
 ter can be programmed
 its responses cannot be
 ished from the
 's, then, by Turing's
 , one has to admit that
 hine is intelligent.
 but if the experimenter
 void chess champion,
 questions take the
 f moves played in a
 chess games? It is
 ficult to devise a set of
 as that will discriminate
 n computers and
 s, but if the champion's
 y objective is to win the
 then discrimination
 as more difficult.
 hat was it that made
 Casparov think that a
 mpeting against him
 e internet in a
 neous display a couple
 s ago was using a
 ter to help select its
 's Black's excellent
 g play - and the
 e of a computer beside
 (necessary for the
 t connection) - may
 en enough to alert
 os's suspicions. The
 ss with which they then

threaded their way through complex tactics seemed to confirm it. Finally, 29...Rf8! was too much for him. After 30.Rxd8+ Kxf8 White has no good discovered check with his knight, because the threat of Qc1+ is hanging over him. So Kasparov refused to continue the game. The captain of the Internet team has strongly denied all charges, pointing out that the players were being watched all the time. I don't know who is right. See what you think:

White: Garry Kasparov
Black: Internet Chess Club

1 d4 Nf6	16 Ng5 e3
2 c4 g6	17 cxd6 cxd6
3 Nc3 Bg7	18 fxe3 Bb6
4 e4 d6	19 Rxf3+ Qxf3
5 Be2 0-0	20 Nc4 Bxc3+
6 Nf3 e5	21 Kf1 Nf5
7 0-0 Ne7	22 Ra3 Bd4
8 d5 Nc6	23 Qd2 Qd8
9 b4 a5	24 Bg4 Ne7
10 Ba3 bxa4	25 Bxc3 Qx8
11 Bxb4 Nd7	26 Nxd6 Qd7
12 a4 f5	27 Re3 Nxd5
13 a5 Nf6	28 Qa2 Qc6
14 c5 Nxe4	29 Rf1 Rf8
15 Nc4 bxc4	



No.3469 Saturday 29 November

ACROSS

- 1 With one's king under attack (2,5)
- 5 Avoids (5)
- 8 Eagle's nest (5)
- 9 Kenyan port (7)
- 10 Infectious disease (9)
- 12 Bird of prey (3)
- 13 Digs (6)
- 14 Small fish (6)
- 17 Enemy (3)
- 18 Yield (9)
- 20 Cuisine (7)
- 21 Front part of stage (5)
- 23 Subject to ebbs and flows (5)
- 24 Worthy of remark (7)

DOWN

- 1 Ancient British tribe (5)
- 2 Vehicle (3)
- 3 Carry out (7)
- 4 Japanese robe (6)
- 5 Latin American dance (5)
- 6 Plain (9)
- 7 Not deep (7)
- 11 Lie (9)
- 13 Shortfall (7)
- 15 Imprecise (7)
- 16 Coloured pencil (6)
- 18 Charm (5)
- 19 Area for shooting practice (5)
- 22 Bone (3)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:
ACROSS: 1 Harts, 4 Topping (Heartstopping), 8 Lampoon, 9 Niece
10 Inner, 11 Related, 13 Glen, 15 Guinea, 17 Voyage, 20 Style, 22 Re-
plete, 24 David, 26 Great, 27 Popular, 28 Deserve, 29 Suede, DOWN:
1 Helping, 2 Roman, 3 Scourge, 4 Tenure, 5 Panel, 6 Inertia, 7 Greece
12 Envy, 14 Last, 16 Imprime, 18 Oedipus, 19 Endorse, 21 Temple, 2
22 Rigid, 23 Enter, 25 Value.

Love All; dealer West	
	North
	♠ Q J 9
	♥ 7 4
	♦ A K 10 9 3
	♣ K 5 4
West	East
♠ A 5 2	♠ 6 4
♥ 9 8 6 3 2	♥ Q J 10 5
♦ none	♦ 7 5 4 2
♣ Q J 10 7 3	♣ A 8 6
	South
	♠ K 10 8 7 3
	♥ A K
	♦ Q J 8 6
	♣ 9 2

This was a difficult decision which faced Wendy Kaplan in the final of the Illinois State Championship. At double match point Wendy—who remains the only woman ever to have won the World Championship—has a 52 to play.

As she is trailing in the race by 62 pips to 90, the running play 20/13 can quickly be discounted. There are three real choices: (a) 13/8, 13/11; (b) 13/8, 7/5; (c) 7/5, 6/1. All three plays have their merits. Play (a) keeps contact without damaging the home board; play (b) constructs a closed home board making any hit by Black a game winner, but leaves White a direct shot; play (c) maintains maximum contact at the cost of a weakening of the home board.

In the game, Wendy made the bold choice of 13/8, 7/5. Her opponent rolled 43 which he played 6/2, 6/3. On her next roll Wendy had to move her remaining man from her mid-point. White then rolled 51, played 13/7. Wendy rolled 62, hitting both blots with 20/18*12*, and easily won the game.

Wendy had made a bold play under pressure and reaped her due reward. The ability to play well under extreme pressure is the hallmark of a good player. And what of her choice of move?

Extensive roll-outs show that the best move is play (c), albeit not by much. The key thing for Black in this position is to hit a shot, and she should play the move that optimises her chances of a shot on the next roll. The slight damage to the home board is not as important as generating that possible shot. A good lesson in weighing the importance of different elements of a position.

15/OUTDOOR

THE INDEPENDENT
SATURDAY 29 NOVEMBER 1997

Wind power to put you in a spin

Fancy being pulled along at 50mph, 18in from the ground, by a mad kite with a will of its own? Try parakiting. Eric Kendall checks it out.

As you hurtle across a field, with mud flying, the ground rushes by just inches beneath you as the wind powers your huggy with extraordinary force. Parakiting - being towed in a three-wheel buggy by a power kite - is fast, exhilarating and demanding. Pull the wrong string and you'll be wearing the scenery.

It all seems so unlikely. Kites used to be nice, approachable, easy-going types of things. But, like Rottweilers, some have more bite than others. What's really impressive when you first get on the commercial end of a power kite is that with one sharp pull on the lines, the thing leaps from the ground and pulls even more sharply back, at wind speeds that don't even ruffle your feathers. There's something going on that doesn't quite meet the eye; no wonder someone decided they'd be good for locomotion.

The trick is that once "inflated" by the breeze, power kites form an aerofoil shape - the same profile as a plane's wing. Without a fuselage, luggage, 300 people and the duty free, these particular wings have only themselves to lift, which they do with abandon, dragging you for a ride. Once you get on wheels, you can stop struggling and start having fun.

In fact, there's a bit more to it than that. Just flying these four-line kites is a challenge that you have to combine with controlling the kart by footwork alone. It's a bit like trying to pat your head and rub your tummy simultaneously.

The way to learn is in two stages: flying the kite while on your feet, mimicking the control and the moves required when kiting, and then learning to steer the kart itself, without a kite - like go-karting, only more grown-up. Put the two skills together and you get pulled flat on your face, but that's only the start.

Though the complexity of a four-line kite is daunting, it gives the greatest potential for control and for avoiding involuntarily kart exits. In the right hands it's a highly manoeuvrable, precise bit of gear. In the wrong hands the possibilities are endless: it can vary from damp squib to shoulder-wrenching mad thing in the blink of an eye, and can drag a would-be kite flier across a beach at astonishing speed, leaving impressive furrows big enough for small children to play in.

The lines are arranged with the two on the left leading from one handle and the two on the right from the other. The handles allow pressure to be applied to each line individually, so that the kite can be spun, turned, accelerated and braked by means of cunning movements that are even harder to do than they would be to describe.

Learning to use the "wind window", the roughly triangular area (downwind of the kite flier) in which it's possible to fly the kite, is the other major factor in kite control; a good feel for the window gives optimum scope for manoeuvring once on wheels.

The karts are as simple as the kites are complex. The front wheel has foot pegs sticking out from either side, by which the

wheel can be turned to steer the kart. The two back wheels are spread wide apart and to the rear of the bucket seat in which you recline.

The whole set-up is so low-slung that its handling is phenomenal, and a brisk turn of the front wheel at speed will spin the kart to a halt rather than tipping it - to do that, you need to add the pull of the kite in the wrong direction.

Putting the two together for the first time is the hardest part. With your kite flying, you have to jump into your kart, but a gust at the wrong moment can have you 10 yards downwind of it before you know what's happened. Once aboard, with a steady wind and a wide open expanse to aim across, you're away.

The sensation of speed, about 18 inches

from the ground, is phenomenal. Exciting it may be, but until you master cornering and stopping, it's full steam ahead. As in all the best sports, there are no brakes, but in this case the "accelerator" is also jammed in the "on" position: all that talk of 50mph with the wind behind you is starting to look conservative.

Where and how to learn

Parakiting is very new. The UK now has a grand total of nine Parakart Association (PKA) approved instructors who can offer training courses and advice on buying equipment.

A basic set up includes: buggy (£199 upwards), 3-4 metre power kite (£200 upwards), harness (£45), protective pads, helmet and goggles. Waterproof clothing

is useful. The minimum viable area for kiting is about the size of two football pitches. Beaches and large playing fields are ideal, preferably free of other users.

Anyone with reasonable co-ordination can parakart. Kite size can be tailored to user weight and strength. Once you are beyond the novice stage, a harness is used into which the kite is clipped for power transmission, reducing stress on the arms and upper body.

This is a good idea, with an official speed record of 54mph, and over 60mph claimed unofficially.

Just trundling round in circles for the fun of it is enough for many, but there is also an aggressive racing scene (competitively trundling round in circles for the fun of it) in which Brits excel.

Contacts

Parakart Association: send sac to Jayne Suckling, 31 Oakdale, Crown Wood, Bracknell, Berks RG12 0TG; Ben or Dante at The London Beach Shop, Portobello Road (0171-243 2772); Dominic at UFO Active Leisure, Weston-super-Mare (01934 644988); Cuning Stunts (01722 410588) offers the UK's most comprehensive training set-up, with three instructors based in Salisbury. Their one-day, all-inclusive starter courses cost £40, and wind permitting should have you successfully performing the basics by the end of the day. The first three readers to write to them at 45-47 Fisherton Street, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP2 7SU, will receive a free training course at their Salisbury base on 8 February 1998.



Let's go fly a kite; but this time, attach it to a kart and try to fly it and manoeuvre as you career along in your 'wind window'

Photograph: Peter Grant

'Coming to grips with the Nether region

Two hundred years ago this month, Coleridge walked the Quantock hills and contemplated the 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner'. Clive Fawcett followed in his footsteps.

Autumn mist meant that we were not quite able to see the nuclear power station at Hinkley Point on Bridgewater Bay from our vantage point on top of Somerset's Quantock Hills. So our view across the heather- and bracken-clad hills towards the bay and distant Wales must have been much the same as it was in Coleridge's day, two centuries ago.

The poet and his young wife Sara and baby son Hartley came to live in the small town of Nether Stowey at the foot of the hills in January 1797. They were followed seven months later by their friends William and Dorothy Wordsworth, who took a year's lease on Alfoxton House, a large, early-18th-century property two miles away, near the village of Holford. The two poets used to walk the hills together, and our aim was to retrace some of the tracks they used.

It is a particularly appropriate walk this month, as it was in November 200 years ago while walking in these hills that the two discussed *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. It was published in 1798.

We drove from the centre of Nether Stowey, following the sign to Crowcombe. After two miles we parked the car at Dead Woman's Ditch, so called because of the body of a woman traveller found near the spot in medieval times. From there we took an unsigned track on the other side of the road from the car park, and walked for just under a mile to the main track that follows the Quantock Ridge. We followed the ridge path for about a mile and a half. The autumn mist had lifted sufficiently for us to have splendid views over the undulating countryside to the west. After about a mile we reached Bicknoller Post. This old oak post marks the site of a building where carriages stopped to change horses on the coach road from Holford to the small town of Williton, five miles to the west. Tracks shoot out here in all directions. Beware, the Quantocks are not here in all directions. We were grateful that we had a large-scale Ordnance Survey map so that we could identify the various points mentioned in the introduction to my collection of Coleridge's poems.

Bicknoller post is only 200 yards or so from an ancient track known as the Great Road. Once we reached his clearly defined former packhorse track we turned right, following the stony route for just under a mile. Eventually we followed it gently downhill to mile. Eventually we followed it gently downhill to mile. Eventually we followed it gently downhill to mile. Eventually we followed it gently downhill to mile.

Here we left the Great Road and walked through Alfoxton Park to see the house where the Wordsworths once lived. Our route led us steeply down past the rear of the building, now a hotel. Once past the big house, we were tempted to take the main driveway down through the woods to Holford village and the Plough pub. But, realising we had missed lunchtime there, we decided to keep walking and took a footpath signposted "Holford via Dog Pound" that led to a field of close-cropped grass which we crossed diagonally to a stile in the far corner. We then descended about a quarter of a mile through woods of beech and holly to join a bridle track. Very shortly we emerged beside a large green, a quarter of a mile or so from Holford village.

We walked along until we found an old-fashioned Somerset County Council sign which pointed us in the direction of Holford Combe. The road led past a newly thatched cottage and the attractive-looking Combe House Hotel. Despite a large sign saying "Open to Nether Residents" and an enticing-looking menu, we resisted the temptation to take an early tea and plodded up the combe, until the valley widened and we found ourselves in a large, flat, green area traversed by a shallow, gurgling brook. We took a quick break to eat the picnic we had brought with us, then carried straight on over a ford where the metalled road came to an end. The track ran beside the stream up the steep combe.

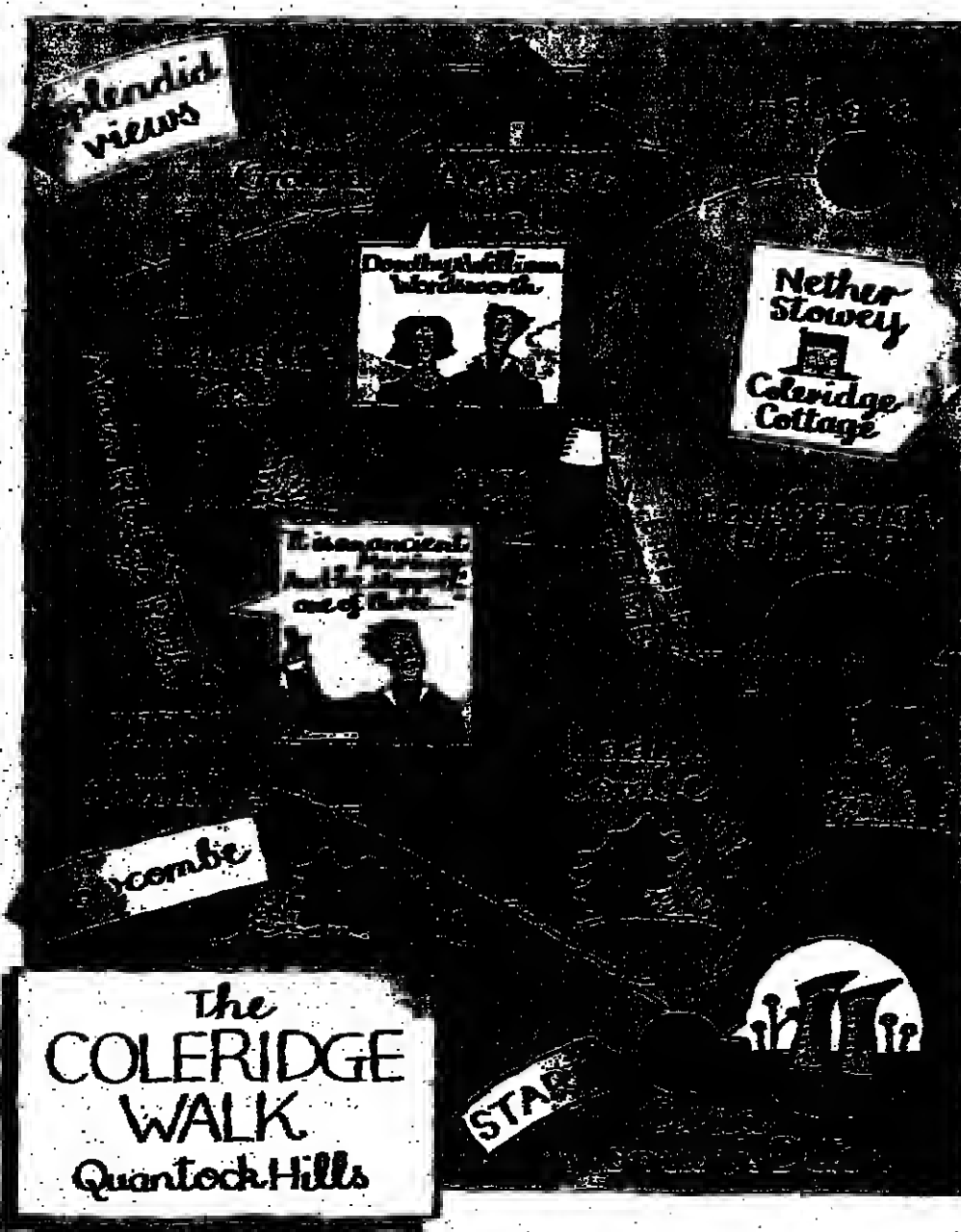
As the gradient steepened we looked carefully for our escape route, a short path to the left about a mile up the combe from Holford. This brought us into Lady's Combe - clearly marked on the 1:25,000 map. A steep climb of about a third of a mile led us to a clearing at the foot of Dowsborough Hill fort.

The path ascending the steep gradient to the hill fort, an Iron Age camp, lay to our left. We took the path in the other direction to join the minor road that climbs gently through the woods for less than a quarter of a mile to join the Nether Stowey-Crowcombe road opposite Dead Woman's Ditch. We drove back to Nether Stowey. We were unable to visit Coleridge Cottage, where the poet and his family lived from 1797 to 1800, since it was closed for the winter. But we had a large tea at Stowey Tea Rooms in Castle Street.

Length of walk: About seven miles

Map: 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey Explorer 2

Three leaflets describing walks in the area and the Coleridge and Wordsworth connections are available from the Curator, Coleridge Cottage, Nether Stowey, Somerset TA5 1NQ, price 40p each. Send an A5 stamped, addressed envelope.



RECYCLED

Westbourne Grove: a call from Björk

From the shops of Queensway, past cheap Indian restaurants, designer furnishes, run-down grocers, video stores - through the nightmare, five-way Chestow Corner where the buses terrify the bravest cyclist. This is Westbourne Grove, where poverty and wealth exist side by side as nowhere else in London.

I pedal past Madonna's favourite jewellers, the Antony Worrall Thompson restaurant and a sudden clutch of antique shops, to the very centre, where eccentricity crowds upon chi-chi health club, where the ultimate designer café overlooks prize-winning public toilets - the very point where, each year the Carnival parade is judged. Where else would you expect to pass by Björk, surely the oddest woman in town?

I push on towards Portobello, and the realisation comes only when I've cycled a few yards past. She sits alone on a bench outside the pub, mobile clamped to her ear, a bizarre collage of unrelated garments and the earnest, squeaky sound of her voice in what I assume is Icelandic, and, even judging from that tiny snippet, was evidently of some importance or concern.

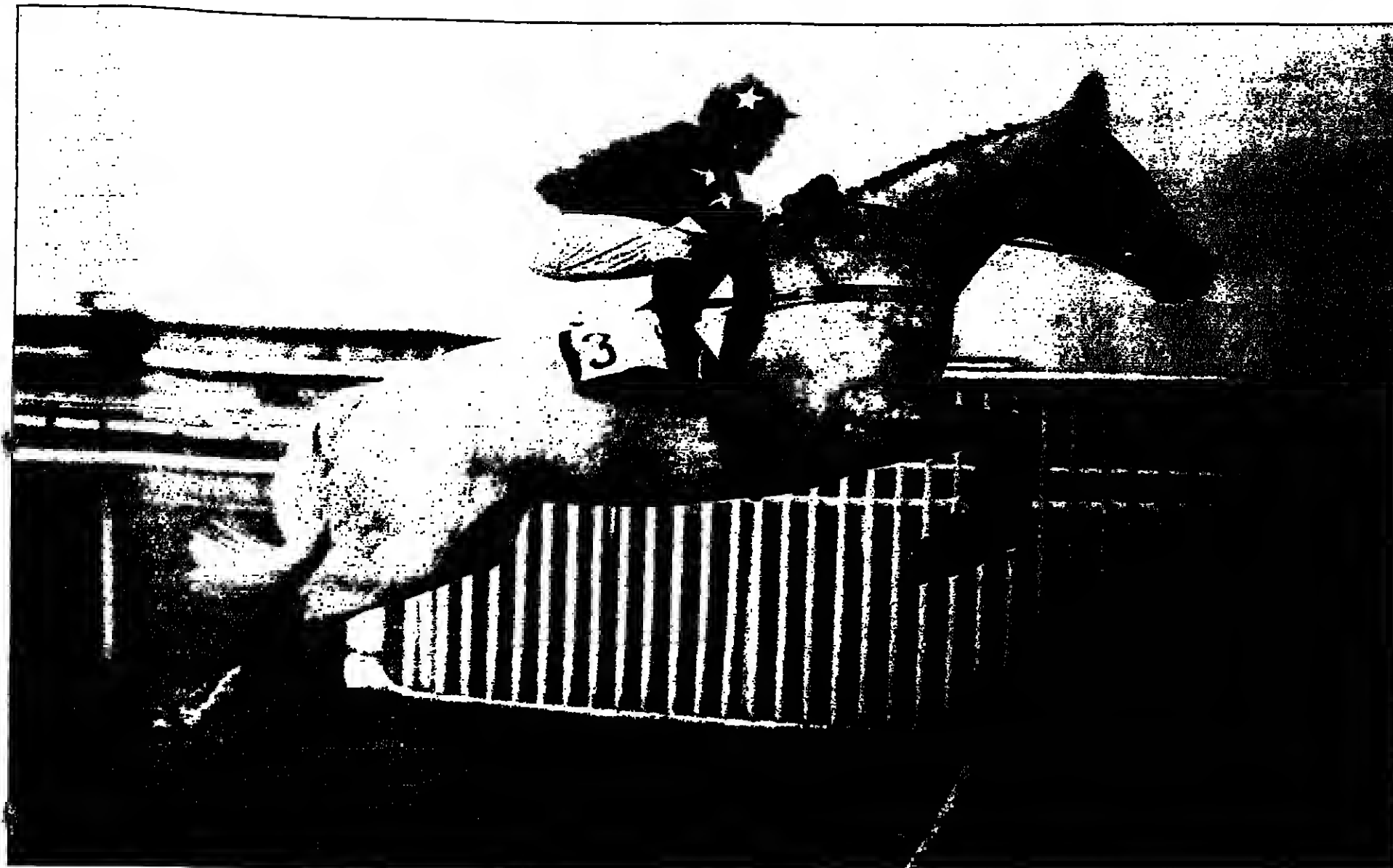
What could possibly be of concern to this strange lady? It must be the pursuit of some creative endeavour, a new venture into realms of music, sexuality and art with which to bemuse and fascinate her public. Or maybe it is a recalcitrant boyfriend, some pushy impresario.

The Grove: poverty and wealth, design and eccentricity, glam and Christianity; elegant beauties, down-and-out beasts. This tiny woman, multicultural, arty and intense, evident wealth in Oxfam clothes, personifies it all.

Pedal along the Grove any day of the week, and you will find it's London's passageway. This is a wonderful, brave, spirited area, and Björk is perhaps its definitive inhabitant.

Peter Reynolds

17/RACING



Leap in the Paric Suny Bay kicking up the dirt at Haydock ten days ago for an all-the-way victory that ensured favouritism for today's big race

Photograph: Nick Stuart

Bradley forecasts a bright future for Suny

It is 13 years since a favourite won the Hennessy Gold Cup, but a rider with a chequered career in the race is feeling lucky on board the chaser who will carry most punters' cash, reports Richard Edmondson.

When it comes to short careers, National Hunt jockey is right up there with kamikaze pilot and Oliver Reed's drinking companion. Graham Bradley is the exception to the rule.

At the age of 37, the Yorkshireman ought really to be running a tipping service, guesting on the proliferation of racing programmes that have risen like weeds, or just plain eating. However, the old bones are still groaning on and they are operating pretty much in unison if the jockey's continued support from the nation's trainers is a barometer.

Bradley has had a choice for this afternoon's Hennessy Gold Cup at Newbury. He could have ridden either last year's winner, Coome Hill, or Suny

Bay, whom many, the bookmakers included, expect to be accepting the trophy-polishing duties after today's 41st running of the race.

Bradley has plumped for the latter and there is historical perspective at play here as some judges anticipate Suny Bay may progress from this cootest to win the Gold Cup. The last best to manage this double was Michael Dickinson's Bregawn, who, back in 1982, was entrusted to a young rider at Harewood who did not speed a fortune on razors, ood G Bradley.

Bradley could have ridden a Hennessy victor for Suny Bay's trainer, Charlie Brooks, two years ago, but was aboard Black Humour as the stablemate Couldnt Be Better strode home.

Brooks was close to being a forlorn figure that day as he felt he owed Bradley one. Today is payback time. The jockey appreciates it.

"Suny Bay was so impressive at Haydock [in the Edward Hamner Handicap Chase earlier this month] that I had to stay with him," he said yesterday. "I

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Suny Bay (Newbury 2.25)
NB: I'm Supposin (Newbury 1.15)

was amazed at how easily he won and it was a performance that had Gold Cup, over mind Hennessy, written all over it.

"He rides, and feels, like a much improved horse this season and although we know he

goes well on the soft or heavy I wouldn't mind if there was no more rain as the ground at Haydock was beautiful and he absolutely plinged off it.

"I said afterwards that he was up there with Bregawn and Wayward Lad as the best I've ever ridden and, while he's got to give quite a lot of weight away to ood or two useful horses, I do think he's got a great chance. He jumps and stays and he's getting better all the time."

There is a caveat in the fact that Burrough Hill Lad in 1984 was the last favourite to win a Hennessy. There are others with pedigree in the race (not least the Voice who today completes his 40th and last momentary of the great race). Martin Pipe is after his third Hennessy with Eudipe, follow-

ing the exploits of Strands Of Gold (1988) and Chatham (1991).

The five-year-old has the blinkers removed for this afternoon's assignment, but would certainly have more chance if all his rivals were fitted with pillowcases.

The ood that everyone seems to fear is Ireland's Time For A Run, who significantly sneaks into the race on 10st. His fox connections are owner JP McManus and trainer Edward O'Grady (the artist formerly known as Eddie). Their vehicle has hardly branded reliability as his most potent weapon though, and his threat may have been overrated. Trying Again too is fancied, but this seems hardly the occasion to examine if he gets a trip of this nature.

An each-way consideration is Belmont King, whose stable is going well and is not adverse to the odd yomp, as he showed when winning the Scottish National.

In addition, Francois Doumen does not come over here just to enjoy our fine cuisine and sartorial elegance, and one of his entries should reach the frame. The general belief is that the Frenchman to figure will be Djedjah, but he is unlikely to appreciate the ground. Ciel De Brion, who is owned by a member of the Hennessy family, Henri de Pracomtal, therefore looks the one for hopeful speculators. For those with harder heads and strong constitutions, however, the only win bet appears to be on the short-priced SUNY BAY (nap 2.25).

Earlier on the card, Mistiquet will be a popular choice, but in a protracted contest in this ground only for the brave Spring Marathon (1.50) may be more than a coincidence selection. I'm Snopposin (next bet 1.15) is well fancied by his team for the Gerry Feilden Hurdle. They are not frightened of the likely favourite, Sanmartioo, especially in receipt of 6lb.

McCoy caught out as Challenger fades

A treble narrowly eluded Tony McCoy at Newbury yesterday when Challenger du Luc, but favourite for the Jack Upton Handicap Chase, was caught on the line and beaten a head by Callisoe Bay.

Richard Dunwoody expertly demonstrated how the Pipe chaser needs the most patient of handling when winning last year's Murphy's Gold Cup. Yesterday, McCoy waited until the last fence to produce his

mount to collar his apparently beaten rival only to get no response from the horse on the run to the line.

"Callisoe Bay battled and the other fellow didn't," said winning trainer Oliver Sherwood.

Martin Pipe yesterday broke his own record for the fastest century of jump winners with odds-on shot Rainwatch at Newbury. He was reaching the target 15 days ahead of last year's schedule.

Don't rule out Barton Bank but the brandy should go to Bay

Barton Bank: Although ood 11, Barton Bank ran a cracker on his seasonal reappearance behind One Man at Weithery. The flying grey franked the form by winning the Peterborough Chase and even with top-weight this old warhorse will put up a brave show.

Coome Hill: Back in contention after an injury scare following his third to Banjo at Cheltenham. In races of this calibre a horse has to be 100 per cent and last year's winner carries 24lb more on this occasion.

Suny Bay: An impressive winner at Haydock last week, he made all to win by 11 lengths. With more rain forecast, his chances can only improve and his jockey Graham Bradley is bullish.

Belmont King: No problems with stamina for Paul Nicholls' Scottish Graod National winner but his fitness may be questioned on his first appearance of the season.

Eudipe: This horse seems well held after also finishing behind Suny Bay at Haydock. I can't see too much improvement.

The former National Hunt jockey Steve Smith Eccles (right) gives a runner-by runner analysis of today's Hennessy Cognac Gold Cup Chase.

Trying Again: He is having his first run of the season but is nicely weighted and has Richard Dunwoody on board.

Djedjah: Francois Doumen's Djedjah is a young, progressive chaser but this is an awesome test.

General Wolfe: Second to Suny Bay in that Haydock event but whether he can make up 11

lengths on just 11lb better terms is another question.

Yorkshire Gale: Another evergreen campaigner but, unlike Barton Bank, I'm not convinced he retains his youthful enthusiasm.

Oh So Risky: A useful burdler in his day but has limited chasing experience. He did take a tumble last time.

Time For A Run: He wasn't asked too many questions on his seasonal debut and will strip a lot fitter at Newbury. He will appreciate every drop of rain we get!

Bell Staffboy: He ran over hurdles last time but jumping is the name of the game in the Hennessy.

Grange Brake: Another 11-year-old. This definitely can't win!

Ciel De Brion: Another French raider who is well out of the handicap.

Conclusion: My old sparring partner Graham Bradley is convinced that SUNY BAY will land the prize and I agree with him. The grey is definitely the one they all have to beat but the veteran Barton Bank, who was runner up to Mr Mulligan in the Cheltenham Gold Cup back in March, and the progressive Trying Again will push "Brad" every inch of this extended three and a quarter miles.

● Last week's selection for the First National Bank Gold Cup Handicap Chase at Ascot, Simply Dashing, won at 4-1.

NAPP calls off the punters' crusade

The volunteers who have spent six years campaigning for punters have decided to give up the fight. Greg Wood believes that every backer in Britain was a loser yesterday.

The sums are incredible. Every year, British gamblers contribute almost £1.4 billion pounds to the Treasury. It is punters who play the horses in betting shops who provide the annual £50m or so which the Levy Board distributes to owners and courses to keep the entire industry afloat. And yet, when volunteers who founded the National Association for the Protection of Punters decided yesterday that the organisation could not go on, they had "just enough money in the account", according to Michael Singer, NAPP's chairman, "to pay the final phone bill".

The dozens of punters who contact NAPP every week with complaints against bookmakers will now have nowhere to turn. "There are millions and millions of consumers who are being denied any form of regulation or protection whatsoever," Singer said yesterday. "It's a national scandal that not a penny of the £1.4bn which the Government receives from gambling is going back to protect the people providing it."

The dissolution of NAPP seemed imminent a little over six months ago, but Singer was persuaded by various contacts in the theo Opposition that a Labour government would make all the difference. They had asked the Levy Board - which, remember, is simply collecting and dishing out punters' money - for an annual grant of about £250,000 to fund an office and up to five full-time staff (and if that sounds like a lot, it is worth noting that the Levy Board itself spend almost £2m a year on administration).

The money would have allowed NAPP to continue campaigning, among other things, for a betting ombudsman to resolve disputes, a honing scheme to protect punters when bookies go bust, and tighter guidelines the magistrates who issue betting permits. At a meeting on Thursday with George Howarth at the Home Office, however, it quickly became clear that new Labour takes a distinctly old Tory approach to punter protection. "We were asking for half of one per cent of the Levy collected," Singer said, "but quite honestly it wouldn't have mattered if we'd asked for a five. With this government, you're supposed to give them money, and then you might get a meeting with the top man."

WARWICK

HYPERION
12.30 Sir Lancelot 1.00 Tidebrook 1.30 Pealings 2.00 Filippance 2.30 Soldier Mak 3.00 Kadestrol 3.30 Timely Magic

GOING: Good to Soft.
● Left-hand course, Run-in of 240 yards.
● Course is open to city on 3400ft. Buses from stations at Warwick (10) and Leamington Spa (20). Admissions: Club £22, Ladies £12, Children £5. Refreshments: Club £12, Ladies £6, Children £3. Car Park £5. Car Park £5. Car Park £5.

12.30 SCUNTOR NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS 5) £2,850 added 2m
1. 50/100 BATTLE BELL (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)
2. 10/1 CRYSTAL GLOVE (12) G Hildard 5 11 5... R Edman (7)
3. 10/1 ALBION (14) J Bailey 4 11 0... W Mearns (5)
4. 10/1 BULLDOZER (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)
5. 10/1 BULLDOZER (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)
6. 10/1 BULLDOZER (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)
7. 10/1 BULLDOZER (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)
8. 10/1 BULLDOZER (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)
9. 10/1 BULLDOZER (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)
10. 10/1 BULLDOZER (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)

WARWICKSHIRE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS 5) £7,000 added 2m 3f

1. 10/100 STAR SELECTION (12) J Mearns 5 11 6... F Handford (5)
2. 10/100 THROWER (12) J Mearns 5 11 6... F Handford (5)
3. 10/100 SUNDOWN (12) J Mearns 5 11 6... F Handford (5)
4. 10/100 PEALINGS (12) J Mearns 5 11 6... F Handford (5)
5. 10/100 TONY BROWN (12) J Mearns 5 11 6... F Handford (5)
6. 10/100 TONY BROWN (12) J Mearns 5 11 6... F Handford (5)
7. 10/100 TONY BROWN (12) J Mearns 5 11 6... F Handford (5)
8. 10/100 TONY BROWN (12) J Mearns 5 11 6... F Handford (5)
9. 10/100 TONY BROWN (12) J Mearns 5 11 6... F Handford (5)
10. 10/100 TONY BROWN (12) J Mearns 5 11 6... F Handford (5)

2.00 STAMINA TEST HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS C) £7,000 added 3m 2f

1. 10/100 FULL OF CUTE (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)
2. 10/100 FULL OF CUTE (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)
3. 10/100 FULL OF CUTE (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)
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10. 10/100 FULL OF CUTE (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)

3.00 TOWER NOVICE CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m

1. 10/100 KADASTROF (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)
2. 10/100 KADASTROF (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)
3. 10/100 KADASTROF (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)
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9. 10/100 KADASTROF (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)
10. 10/100 KADASTROF (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)

3.30 NORTON LINDSEY STANDARD FLAT RACE (CLASS H) £1,500 added 2m

1. 10/100 ANDY CRYSTAL (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)
2. 10/100 ANDY CRYSTAL (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)
3. 10/100 ANDY CRYSTAL (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)
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9. 10/100 ANDY CRYSTAL (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)
10. 10/100 ANDY CRYSTAL (12) M Pipe 5 11 6... G Supple (5)

Friend of the horses finally hangs up his microphone

Peter O'Sullivan will call the horses home for the last time at Newbury this afternoon, bringing down the curtain on half a century of commentary for the BBC. His contribution to racing has been remarkable.

He may not feel like it as he squeezes into his eyrie above Newbury this afternoon, just four months shy of his 80th birthday, but Peter O'Sullivan is the racing equivalent of Elie MacPherson.

Just as fashion has "the Body", so the turf has "the Voice", and however you choose to measure fame, there are few greater accolades than to lay claim to the definite article. He deserves it, of course. When sports broadcasting was all clipped moustaches and God Save The King, the Voice was there, with its tidings from deep within the fog that was monochrome.

It brought Arkle and Mill House to the masses, called Red Rum home as he won his third National "like a fresh horse", and then Desert Orchid - "he's beginning to get up" - in the Gold Cup 12 years later.

Above all, O'Sullivan was the Saturday background noise for generations of British children. People who have never visited a betting

shop or racecourse in their adult life can still be swept back 20 years by the sound of the Voice changing pitch as the leaders pass the furlong pole.

But it is the sort of celebrity which can work both ways. "I'm only a bloody commentator," he said recently, as he considered the attention which his impending retirement has attracted. In truth, though, commenting has been just a small part of O'Sullivan's life on the turf.

As a punter and an owner, he has fed money into both ends of the machine, and as a journalist he has helped with the servicing and even the occasional major overhaul. For 36 years, until 1986, his column in the *Daily Express* was impeccably informed, thoughtful and a regular source of winners.

He was instrumental in the paper's sponsorship - recently discontinued, much to his disgust - of the Triumph Hurdle, a race won in his colours by Attivo in 1974. His commentary on the closing stages was famously impartial, though shortly afterwards came one of the only recorded instances of an O'Sullivan "error". "Attivo," he said, "owned by... errr... Peter O'Sullivan." He sounded almost embarrassed.

This much is in the form book and the archives, not to mention his autobiography, *Calling The*

Horses, but the strand which has linked it all is sometimes overlooked. For O'Sullivan has always been thoroughly biased - he is firmly, irredeemably on the side of the horses.

This was not something that might have been predicted when the asthma which blighted his childhood was wrongly diagnosed by one doctor as an allergy to horses, and by the time his mistake had been realised, O'Sullivan's beloved first pony had been sold.

Not before it had kindled a passion for all things equine, though, and he joined the Press Association's racing desk in 1944. Not long afterwards, he was the race-reader assisting Peter Dimmock, one of the BBC's first commentators, and thanks to Dimmock's generous recommendation - "he is as good as I am bad" - soon permanently behind the microphone which only now is he ready to leave.

Through all that time, O'Sullivan has campaigned to improve the lot of the horses, and in doing so has shown more compassion and vision than racing administrators half his age. When, for example, an American "outsider" called Carrie Humble decided to set up the first (and still the only) centre in Britain to rehabilitate ex-racehorses, O'Sullivan was a crucial ally.

BY GREG WOOD

"It would have been very difficult to get as far as we have without his name being behind us, and without him continuing to talk about us," she says. "The first time I spoke to him, I was a little in awe of him, he was the great Voice of Racing, but he just made me want to do the best that I could."

I sometimes say to the people in the yard, "Remember that Peter O'Sullivan could turn up here tomorrow. I want this place clean." He's a fine man, and I haven't met very many of those in this world, and I'm a well-travelled lady. He's a man I wouldn't want to let down."

The good news for the horses is that the campaigning will not stop. "Racehorses should be caught," O'Sullivan says, "before they start the downward spiral that ends at very unappealing markets. I think that it's one of the good things about our time that there is a greater feeling of compassion towards animals, a feeling that we are responsible, as so-called superior creatures, for the lesser creatures. Hopefully, we will get an initiative going in time to get official funding for rehabilitation, and that's something I would hope to be involved in."

Abuse of the whip, too, will still nag at him in retirement. "There is no excuse for abuse, and I think there is abuse at times when horses are tired and the money is down. We are slightly accustomed to this business of having a right crack at a horse, but if it appears that

racing people go to extreme lengths to achieve their aims, racing will lose its appeal."

It would be a fitting tribute to the man perched high above the grandstand if the jockeys riding a finish in the Hennessy left their whips unfurled. Wishful thinking, perhaps, but the race itself is still a carefully chosen sign-off.

The best two horses to carry his colours, Attivo and Be Friendly, a fine sprinter in the late 1960s, were both winners at Newbury. It was also the site of a serious falling-out with his employers when, in 1979, the *Grandstand* director cut short the Hennessy coverage to catch the communal singing before a rugby match at Twickenham. It is 32 years, too, since O'Sullivan helped to audition Julian Wilson (not to mention Michael Stoute) for the job of BBC Racing Correspondent, 24 hours before

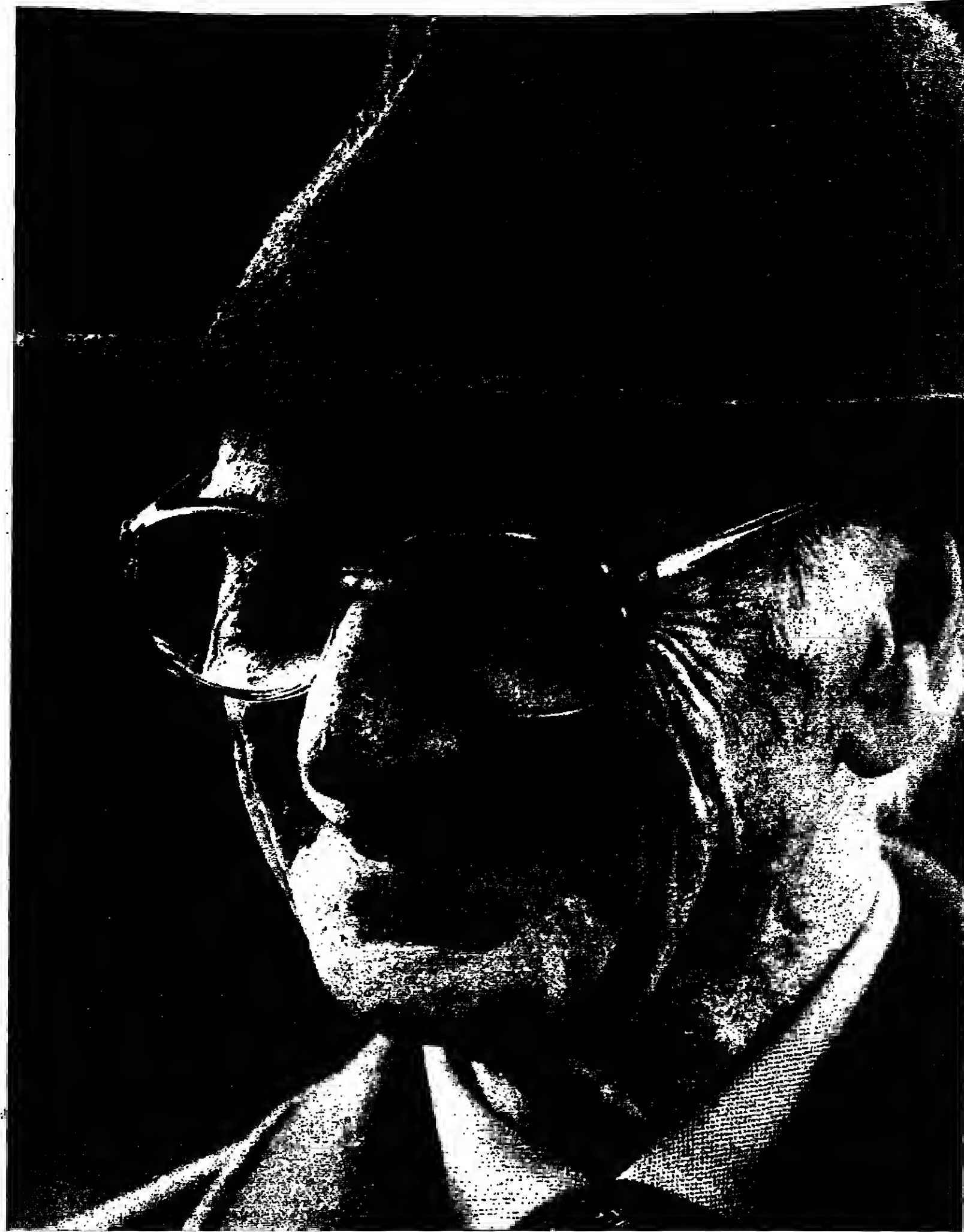
Arkle won the Hennessy, giving 33lb to the runner-up.

"That's why I fancy packing up at Newbury," he says. "Also, it's not far from Chelsea, and there aren't going to be too many runners in the Hennessy, so I shouldn't make too many cock-ups. I've been making mistakes recently, and I was thinking that if I wrote another book, I'd call it 'Miscalling The Horses.'"

He should, at least, be spared a repeat of the worst moment of his 50 years as a commentator, the déshâle of the 1993 Grand National. "In the Foinavon year [when most of the field fell at the 23rd fence], it was Michael O'Hehir who had to do the difficult job. I had nothing to do except rather uncharitably hope that Foinavon might suffer some very small impediment because I was on Honey End [the runner-up]. But the 1993 race was rather fraught. I

was saying, 'this cannot be a race', but there was always that one per cent of doubt that I might be wrong, and then I'd really have blown it. And then what were you to do when they'd jumped the last, when after all they'd completed two circuits. Did you record it with at least a little hyperbole, or ignore them, which would have seemed very discourteous."

Inevitably, he pitched it just right. O'Sullivan will, as always, be painfully nervous as he prepares for his final day at the office. Even now, his sleep is sometimes disturbed by a nightmare in which dozens of horses are passing his position and he cannot name a single one. He will also acknowledge the tributes, of which there will be hundreds, with all possible modesty. One of the best is offered by Carrie Humble. "He is," she says, "a very precious piece of England."



Peter O'Sullivan thinks it's one of the good things about our time that there is a greater feeling of compassion towards animals. Photograph: Robert Halkin



O'Sullivan in 1955: Peter Dimmock's quick assessment of his colleague was 'he is as good as I am bad'. Photograph: BBC

THE VOICE OF RACING

Arkle (1964 Cheltenham Gold Cup):

"They're rounding the home turn and this is it! It's Arkle on the stands side for Ireland and Mill House for England on the far side. Arkle just taking the lead as they come to the last fence. It's gonna be Arkle if he jumps it. He's over and clear. This is the champion, this is the best we've seen for a long time. Arkle is the winner of the Gold Cup..."

Allez France (1974 Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe):

"And Allez France unleashes a run on the outside. And it's Allez France, the Queen of Longchamp, who strikes the front..."

Red Rum (1977 Grand National):

"He's getting the most tremendous cheer from the crowd. They're willing him home now. The 12-year-old Red Rum, being preceded only by loose horses, being chased by Churchtown Boy."

They're coming to The Elbow. There's a furlong between Red Rum and his third Grand National triumph. And he's coming up to the line to win it like a fresh horse in great style. It's hats off and a tremendous reception - you've never heard one like it at Liverpool! Red Rum wins the National..."

Sagaro (1977 Ascot Gold Cup):

"It's Buckskin from Sagaro. Lester Piggott looking to his left for danger. He thinks he's got Buckskin cold! And it's Sagaro now going into the lead. Here comes Ascot history. Sagaro's going to win it for the third time, and gonna coast home at that..."

Sea Pigeon (1980 Champion Hurdle):

"And Sea Pigeon's going to avenge that defeat of last year! He's striding up to the line, the veteran 10-year-old. He's won it at last! Sea Pigeon wins the Champion Hurdle, Monksfield is beaten for the first time in three years..."

Dawn Run (1986 Cheltenham Gold Cup):

"It's Wayward Lad trying to break his Cheltenham hoodoo, being pressed by Dawn Run in the centre. And the mare's beginning to get up! And as they come to the line, she's made it! Dawn Run has won it from Wayward Lad. And Jonjo O'Neill punches the air as the mare has made Turf history - she's become the first to win the Champion Hurdle and the Gold Cup..."

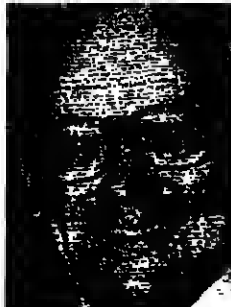
Desert Orchid (1986 Cheltenham Gold Cup):

"Yahoo, who loves the mud is full of running, but Desert Orchid is rallying, he's trying to come again towards the near side. Yahoo on the far side, Desert Orchid on the near side. There's a tremendous cheer from the crowd, Desert Orchid is going to win it! Desert Orchid has won the Gold Cup..."

- Compiled by Ian Davies

AN ERA OF ELEGANCE AND ENTHUSIASTS: THE BBC COMMENTATORS WHO PERSONIFIED THEIR SPORTS

The retirement of Peter O'Sullivan signals the passing of a great tradition, the slow ebbing away of commentators motivated by a love of sport and a desire to communicate that passion without embracing the excesses of hyperbole or narrow-minded nationalism. Chris Maume looks at some of the men who made BBC sports coverage an institution.



HARRY CARPENTER

Born 1925, began career on *Greyhound Express*. First boxing commentary for BBC in 1949. Finest moment: Muhammad Ali beating Foreman. "Oh my God, I don't believe it! He's won the title back at the age of 32!" he roared. OBE in 1991, retired in '94. Not always objective: "Get in there Frank!" he yelled when Bruno fought Tyson. Catchphrase: not actually his. Know what I mean, Andy?



BRIAN JOHNSTON

Born 1912. Went to Eton and Oxford, served in the Grenadier Guards in the war. BBC Cricket Correspondent 1963-72, moved from television to *Test Match Special* in early 70s, and commented on many Royal occasions. Most famous Johnstonballs: "The bowler's Holding, the batsman's Willey." Best Johnstonballs: "Play Bingleworth has just relieved himself at the Pavilion End."



HENRY LONGHURST

A poet of his craft. Born in 1908, became a journalist and shared a bachelor pad with EW Swanton after leaving Cambridge. *Sunday Times* Golf Correspondent for 21 years. "Golf is the Esperanto of sport," he wrote. All over the world golfers talk the same language, much of it nonsense. Renowned amateur who hung up his clubs when he got the yips. OBE in 1972, died in 1978.



TED LOWE

An official at the Snooker World Championships in 1948. Got his chance as commentator when Raymond Glendinning was struck with laryngitis. Started *Pot Black* in 1969. Retired last year after 43 years of whispering for England, but was brought back in the spring for *Seniors Pot Black*. Most famous Loweball: "For those of you watching in black and white, the blue is behind the yellow."



DAN MASKELL

Left school at 14 to work as a ball-boy at Queen's for three shillings a week. RAF squadron leader during the war. Never missed a day's play at Wimbledon from 1929 to 1991. Died December 1992, posthumously inducted into International Tennis Hall Of Fame last year. Catchphrases: "Oh I say", "Dream of a backhand". His pauses made him the Fintor of sports commentating.



RON PICKERING

Commentated on six Olympics for the BBC, uttered possibly the most famous Colemanballs, "Juanarena opens his legs and shows his class." Renowned coach - among his successes was Lynn Davies, 1964 Olympic long jump gold medalist. Leading anti-drug campaigner and president of Haringey AC. Died in 1991. Linford Christie dedicated his Olympic gold medal the next year to Pickering.



MURRAY WALKER

First commentary for the BBC was from Silverstone in 1948. Had his ailing hips replaced so he could carry on commenting - in order to be able to walk round the pits. More blunder-prone than most, but once said: "I don't make mistakes. I make prophecies that are proved wrong." Typical Walkerball: "Unless I'm very much mistaken - I'm very much mistaken!" OBE last year, was 74 in October.



EDDIE WARING

Commentated on rugby league from 1951-81. Spawned countless appreciation societies, though 10,000 signed a petition to have him sacked. As famous for his A Knockout. Managed Dewsbury in '40s, winning two Challenge Cups and two championships. Catchphrases: "Up and under", "Early bath". Most celebrated line: "Poor lad," as Don Fox famously missed his conversion at Wembley.

19/PHOTO-SHOOT

THE VOICE OF RACING

Since 1964 Clive...
They're rounding...
side for Ireland...
the far side...
coming to the...
pumps in the...
clear. This is...
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Sport's biggest secret society meet for annual mud fest

It is impossible to be sure precisely how many of them were out on the circuits, in the parks, and along the forest trails, but they reckon at least two million. That figure should be more than sufficient to convey the scale of this annual growing, sliding, bobbie hat and mud fest. The Network Q RAC Rally is the biggest spectator event in British sport.

Yet it remains a world of mystery to those outside the exclusive if enormous circle, a peripheral activity still out of television's remote control and therefore beyond the comprehension of the armchair masses.

Inroads have been made, of course, and the packaging moguls yearn for the day when they can squeeze it all into their small screen. The introduction of a "super special" stage, a Scalextric-style, side-by-side

whizz round a short track is, at best, an irrelevant side show, and, at worst, it's a Knock-Out re-enactment.

The long player rally has been reduced to a compact disc. The purists lament the anesthetising of the old beast, the passing of the all-night vigils and, this year, the journeys to the Great North Roads that intimidated and often terrified rallying's greatest drivers.

Yet even in its condensed format, the RAC Rally has provided the elements of challenge, drama and danger. Away from the artificial arenas of Sunday, or the "Mickey Mouse" stages as the drivers call them, deep in the forests of Wales, the demands took their toll, stretching the endurance of man and machine.

The stars of the forest tracks were two Britons, Subaru's Colin McRae (pictured above), the even-

tual winner, and Mitsubishi's Richard Burns, who finished fourth. McRae missed out on the world championship by a point but is generally acknowledged as the most gifted driver today. Burns, at 26, three years his junior, has the potential to become a genuine rival.

Their feats are unlikely to dominate conversation in the pubs and clubs of urban Britain, but deep in the forests they talk of little other than their sport, style and car control. It is the language of sport's largest secret society, a language they are content to keep to themselves.

Copies of these photographs - and any others by the Independent's sports photographers David Ashdown, Peter Jay and Robert Hallam - can be ordered by telephoning 0171-293-2534.

-Derick Allsop



PHOTOGRAPHS BY
DAVID ASHDOWN

Neil Back's England career has seen him fêted, dropped, ignored, recalled, hero-worshipped, cast aside, and misunderstood. And today he's coming back for more...

Neil Back squares up to the Springboks at Twickenham this afternoon having spent most of his career proving himself.

Chris Hewett talks to a natural-born fighter who may have finally found a sympathetic home for his unique talents.

These are dangerous waters and Neil Back knows it. It was almost exactly two years ago that South Africa, newly crowned as world champions, swaggered into Twickenham, kicked England's collective backside until the red rose turned red raw and made such an unholy mess of Andy Robinson's long-awaited return to the Test arena that the Bath flanker was back among the has-beens before he could say Nelson Mandela.

Robinson later admitted, albeit through gritted teeth, that he had never felt so helpless on a rugby pitch. There were many reasons for his obvious discomfort - picked by Jack Rowell to play the role of a human catalyst, a link-man working in tandem with his outside-half and centres, it took England precisely 38 minutes to give him the ball - but to the "Big is Beautiful" brigade, the problem was, as plain as the hooded nose on Robbo's face. He had been overmatched. Ruben Kruger, his opposite number, was five inches taller and three stones heavier. End of story.

Today, the Springboks come armed with an even more imposing physical specimen in the breakdown position. Andre Venter, the fast and fiery Free Stater whose ooterior mean streak frequently leaves him on the wrong side of disciplinary tracks, is quite something: 6ft 5in of attitude and 17 stones of strop. Where does that leave

Back and his Robboesque dimensions? In extremely bullish mood, that's where.

"I don't think the Springboks are any more physical than anyone else; certainly, I didn't feel alarmed or threatened by their size or strength during the Lions tour back in the summer. I've had this size thing around my neck for as long as I can remember but quite honestly, it doesn't even register any more. "We're all more powerful and more dynamic - it's inevitable in a professional environment - and as far as I'm concerned, the old 'higger they are, the harder they fall' adage is more true today than ever before."

"Look, they don't come much bigger and stronger than Lomu, do they? Watch the tape of the Emerging England-New Zealand game at Huddersfield and you'll see little old me driving him backwards. To my mind, Christian Cullen is a more difficult defensive proposition. At first sight, there's nothing to him. But he steps out of more tackles than anyone I've ever seen. Don't make the mistake of thinking size is everything."

Even so, the issue of size, or lack of it, has given Back more grief than the back rows of the world combined since he first revealed his peonchant for perpetual motion with a virtuoso display for England Under-21s in Romania eight years ago. In no particular order, he has been fêted, dropped, ignored, recalled, hero-worshipped, cast aside, mishandled and misunderstood. He has been on the canvas more times than Frank Bruno and spent longer in the cold than Captain Oates. If top-level sport is a roller-coaster experience, Back should be sponsored by Alton Towers.

"There have been plenty of low points, I suppose, and the lowest of the low was that Springbok match in '95. I'd played in the first three World Cup games that summer before

picking up a hamstring and eveo though I was disappointed at missing the rest of the tournament, I felt I was well and truly in business at England level. When the Boks arrived and Jack Rowell said he was looking to play a genuine open-side, I thought: 'It's got to be me because I'm the only one in the squad.' Then Robbo turned up out of the blue on the Wednesday night and played on the Saturday. That really hurt."

"There were flat times last season, too, especially when the Lions selectors announced their initial squad of 62 last season and my name wasn't there. I was convinced my chance had gone, so you can imagine how I felt when they picked me in the 36 to travel. I was lying in bed when Alison, my fiancée, came in with the mail. When I realised they'd chosen me, I cried my eyes out. Honestly. The tears were streaming down my face. That's how much it meant to me."

Back returned from the tour feeling seven feet tall and with good reason. After years of being overlooked, often without a word of explanation, in favour of Peter Winterbottom, Ben Clarke, Steve Ojomoh, Robinson, Lawrence Dallaglio and, latterly, Richard Hill of Saracens, he had produced his finest rugby on the grand stage for coaches who genuinely valued the skills and commitment he brought to the cause. "It was wonderful to start the final Test in Jo'burg, but the midweek game against Free State in Bloemfontein was just as big a high," he says. "I've never been involved in better rugby than the stuff we produced that night."

Happily, the good vibes remain very much in evidence, even though the new England coaching panel gave Hill the nod for the first two legs of the current four-match SANZA series. "I wanted to play, of course, but I can handle disappointments when the coach is being up front with me and I



Small wonder: Neil Back has been described as too small so often 'it doesn't register any more'. Photograph: David Ashdown

know where I stand," said Back, earnestly.

"This management set-up has it absolutely right in my view. They're leaving no stone unturned in attempting to maximise our chances of winning the next World Cup. They're pulling

in specialist expertise in every conceivable area and they're doing things professionally. Yes, I was a bit down about not starting against Australia, but Clive Woodward gave me his reasons and made me feel part of what was going on. There was no lingering downside, no sense of things happening behind my back.

"As it turns out, I'm playing alongside Richard and Lawrence against the South Africans and I happen to think that we can achieve a great deal as a unit."

We're all footballers with decent hands, but we're all grafters, too, willing to get down there among the studs and win some 50-50 ball. We're comfortable in possession and comfortable with each other, so the Boks can be as big as they like, can't they?"

England's controversial £87.5m television deal with BSkyB has suffered a technical hitch but Twickenham yesterday insisted the show must go on.

Brittle wants clarification over Sky deal

England's controversial £87.5m television deal with BSkyB has suffered a technical hitch but Twickenham yesterday insisted the show must go on.

Cliff Brittle, the Rugby Football Union management board chairman, has moved to allay fears that the plug could be pulled on live satellite coverage of England's Test match against New Zealand next week.

Sky bought exclusive live rights to all of England's home internationals over the next five years, yet Brittle is unhappy with some contract clauses. He is seeking clarification of the contract, but claims that Sky have rejected requests for immediate talks.

However, Brittle said: "The RFU would like to make it clear that it wishes to maintain a good relationship with its broadcast partner."

"The RFU has no intention of doing anything other than to comply fully with its contractual obligations with regard to broadcasting forthcoming internationals."

Some RFU officials who negotiated and signed the deal last year, however, are no longer in power at Twickenham.

The RFU yesterday confirmed Phil Larder's appointment as full-time coaching adviser. Larder, the former Great Britain and England rugby league coach, will start his new job on Monday after helping the England coach, Clive Woodward, prepare for last weekend's Old Trafford Test against New Zealand and today's game against South Africa at Twickenham.

The 52-year-old will work with players identified by Woodward, while also visiting clubs throughout the country and organising coaching courses.

Larder, whose post was rubber-stamped by the RFU management board yesterday, played rugby union for Loughborough University, Manchester and Sale before switching codes in 1968.

His league career featured spells with Oldham and Whitehaven but it was in coaching that he made his name.

Larder, the Rugby League's first director of coaching, has also worked in league with Widnes, Keighley Cougars and Sheffield Eagles, took England to the 1995 World Cup final and saw Great Britain win eight of their 12 Tests during his time in charge.

Wales heed a warrior's words before All Blacks battle

Wales have attempted to tap into the indomitable spirit of a Falklands War veteran as part of their mental preparation for the Test against the All Blacks at Wembley today.

As Tim Glover reveals, nothing in sport is now left to chance.

Simon Westoo, the Welsh guardsman who suffered horrific burns when his ship, the Sir Galahad, was bombed by Argentine fighters, dined with Wales at their hotel in Buckinghamshire and addressed them on the subject of dealing with adversity. It is a theme that is central to a charity he runs called Weston Spirit.

"We weren't sure how the players would react but it was spellbinding," a Welsh Rugby Union official said. "One of the things you learn in the army is about caring for each other and it's something that easily translates to a team game, especially rugby."

It is 43 years and 13 matches since Wales beat the All Blacks and more recently they have taken some fearful hidings including a record 54-5 defeat in 1988. Few expect Wales to stop the rot today - indeed the joke doing the rounds in Wales is that the game has been switched to Lord's where the scoreboard would be better equipped to keep pace with the points - but there are signs that Kevin Bowring, the coach, and Terry Cobner, the manager, are beginning to get the balance right.

"Welsh forwards saw themselves as ball-handlers rather than ball-winners and in this respect we seemed to have gone full circle," Cobner said. "Traditionally we had ball-winners out users. Welsh backs are still among the best and could beat any opponent in a one-to-one. What we haven't been doing is winning enough possession to put them in that position. We have made a fundamental change in that first and foremost all the forwards are there to win the ball."

That, of course, is the rub, for Wales are feeding a back line that looks as impressive as anything assembled in Britain. For the first time in a long time Wales have players who will have caused the All Blacks to think long and hard for starters the half-backs Robert Howley, playing against New Zealand for

the first time, and Neil Jenkins and the centres Allan Bateman and Scott Gibbs are world class.

"This could be our most difficult Test," John Hart, the New Zealand coach, said. "Wales look more co-ordinated than England. They are well coached and maybe enjoying a resurgence."

You would not expect Hart who, since his appointment two years ago has won 19 Tests out of 20 (the only defeat came in South Africa when the series was already won) to say: "We are the best in the world and Wales have no right to be on the same paddock as us." Even so, Hart is genuinely concerned about the welfare of Welsh rugby and can pinpoint the beginning of its demise.

"They finished third in the World Cup in 1987 and probably thought they were the third

best team in the world," Hart said. "But it was a false picture. The week before they were comprehensively beaten by the All Blacks in Brisbane and that is when Welsh rugby died. They also lost players to rugby league but all that's finished now. I hope Wales are on the way back because we have a historic relationship."

"I just wish the game had been at Cardiff Arms Park." In two years' time the All Blacks will be gracing the new £120m stadium in Cardiff for the next World Cup.

Hart said he was not at all surprised that Bowring had promised there would be no repeat of England's confrontational approach to the haka.

"Both teams will line up on the respective 10 metre lines," said Bowring, who has entrusted the captaincy to the Cardiff

flanker Gwyn Jones, a 25-year-old medical student. "He understands the game I want to play and he's utterly courageous."

Jones took over the captaincy on a tour of the United States last summer and has carried on with bloodless victories over Romania and Tonga. This game though, in front of a crowd of 78,000, is a different ballgame.

"For us it's a double-edged sword playing against such an outstanding side," Jones said. "Because you're looking for ways to improve your own game while measuring yourself against the best. We have experienced players who are full of confidence. Welsh rugby has benefited from the Lions' success and has given us the belief that we can perform at the highest level."

WALES v NEW ZEALAND

at Wembley	
K Morgan	Pontypridd
G Thomas	Brigend
A Bateman	Richmond
S Gibbs	Swansea
N Walker	Cardiff
N Jenkins	Pontypridd
R Howley	Cardiff
C Loader	Swansea
B Williams	Richmond
D Young	Cardiff
G Llewellyn	Llanelli
M Voyle	Llanelli
R Appleyard	Swansea
N Thomas	Bath
G Jones	Cardiff, capt
15 C Cullen	Manawatu
14 J Wilson	Otago
13 F Bunce	North Harbour
12 W Little	North Harbour
11 J Lomu	Counties
10 A Mehrtens	Canterbury
9 J Marshall	Canterbury, capt
8 C Dowd	Auckland
7 N Hewitt	Southlands
6 O Brown	Auckland
5 J Jones	North Harbour
4 R Brooke	Auckland
3 T Randall	Otago
2 Z Brooke	Auckland
1 K Kronfeld	Otago

Substitutes: 16 I Davies (Cardiff); 17 A Thomas (Swansea); 18 P John (Pontypridd); 19 S John (Swansea); 20 J Humphreys (Cardiff); 21 S Williams (Swansea).

Referee: W Erickson (Australia). Kick-off: 3.0 (BBC1).

Jones, who has had two shoulder operations in the last three years, may become a career specialist, like JPR Williams, in sports injuries.

"I can help injured players

on the psychological side as well as with treatment and rehabilitation," he said.

Jones, perhaps more than most, empathised with Simon Weston's address.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

- I don't want to lose every game. I don't sit there and have any more enjoyment than the fans do. Peter Johnson, Everton chairman, on the barracking he has received.
- Everton is a house on fire, the walls are down and, if the blaze isn't put out soon, it will engulf the entire club. Alan Ball, formerly of Everton, after defeat to Aston Villa.
- The training ground will not turn into Colditz Camp. Alan Sugar, Spurs chairman, on his new coach, Christian Gross.
- I could get Spurs into the top six and into Europe. Uri Geller volunteers his services.
- All we asked is for some respect towards our culture. That kind of behaviour has no place on the field. John Hart, New Zealand coach, on England's reaction to the haka.
- The current structure of English rugby is laughable. I don't think there is a country in the world in a worse position to generate a successful national side. Clive Woodward, England rugby union coach.
- If we did it properly, our Test players would play three or four Championship matches a season. David Graveney, England chairman of selectors, on his plan to withdraw Test players from county matches.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Keighley and Workington supported in fight against 'vultures'

Clubs outside Super League have rallied around Keighley and Huddersfield to protect them from threats to expel them from the game.

The two clubs - plus the apparently doomed Prescot - are facing expulsion at the meeting of the Rugby League Council on Wednesday, but their peers in the First and Second Division Association have pledged to defend them.

"We don't think that the fans of Keighley and Workington should be deprived of their teams," said Fassa's chief executive, Bob Scott, after yesterday's meeting of the association. "Super League are waiting like vultures to try to

grah these two clubs' share of the Murdoch money and the unanimous view was that we should support them."

The former Keighley director, Mike Smith, who was recently sacked from the board by the administrator who has run the club for over a year but who remains in the forefront of efforts to save the club, said that an investor might take the club out of administration this weekend.

Failing that, the outstandingly well-supported Cougars are likely to have hundreds of fans lobbying the Council meeting at Salford. Workington are also capable of staging a demonstration of their determination

to survive, despite also being in the hands of an administrator for over a year.

Salford have become the first club to be backed by a High Street fashion label. Joe Bloggs have signed a £240,000 two-year contract to provide the club with a new kit and leasurwear.

The Joe Bloggs chairman, Shami Ahmed, said: "We've got a lot of confidence in Salford and we think they are going places. This is the kind of sport that relates to our street fashions."

Among the first to wear the new shirts were the new signings, Martin Crompton and Josh White, who are expected to contest the scrum-half position next season.

"I was in the same sort of competition with Shaun Edwards at the London Broncos last season," White said. "It makes you perform to the best of your ability."

London have made two more new signings from Australia, with the South Queensland pair of Steele Richless and Matt Tshack joining their squad.

Warrington have turned down a cash offer from Wigan for Paul Sculthorpe, but, with Leeds and St Helens joining Wigan, London and Bradford in being linked with the player, his agent, David McKnight, expects him to move by the end of next week.

- Dave Hodfield

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Cowboys may miss play-offs after Oilers strike in Dallas

An already troubled season for the Dallas Cowboys became demonstrably worse on Thursday night when they lost at home to the Tennessee Oilers.

The Cowboys's were beaten 27-14 in one of two Thanksgiving Day fixtures. It was their second defeat in five days, takes their record to 6-7 and puts them in severe danger of missing the play-offs for the first time in seven seasons. Even if his team is competing beyond the regular season, the fate of the Cowboys head coach Barry Switzer appears sealed, but this latest defeat may hasten his departure.

Troy Aikman - who nearly

missed his first play because he needed a muscle relaxant to relieve severe back spasms which developed in the warm-up - made a poor start and was intercepted on his second and fifth pass attempt, and three times in all. Darryll Lewis claimed two of the interceptions and forced a fumble which was returned for a touchdown.

Barry Sanders rushed for 167 yards for the Detroit Lions as they beat the Chicago Bears 55-20 in the other Thanksgiving Day game. Sanders became the first person to rush for more than 100 yards in 11 successive games in one season.

After years of turmoil a legend comes full circle

Bjorn Borg, the winner of five consecutive Wimbledon singles titles, is due to play in Britain next week for the first time since losing his crown to John McEnroe in 1981. Borg's participation in the ATP Senior Tour of Champions event at the Royal Albert Hall revives piercing memories for his erstwhile agent and for his former coach.

Then-boppers at Wimbledon used to proffer their bras to Bjorn Borg. Nowadays he is in men's and women's underwear on Sloane Avenue. The Scandinavian scintillas are among the remains of the Borg brand name empire.

"The underwear brand was one of the things I helped set up for him," recounted Peter Worth, Borg's former agent, "and it has gone from strength to strength."

In a sense, Worth's business life has turned full circle since he was left to sort out the crumpled contracts after Borg announced his retirement in 1983, aged 26.

As the managing director of the Quintus Group on the King's Road, Worth is the tournament chairman for next week's Honda Challenge at the Royal Albert Hall, where Borg is due to play for the first time in these islands since losing the Wimbledon singles title to John McEnroe in 1981.

The irony of the situation is not lost on Worth's sense of humour, although his demeanour on the occasion Borg informed him of his decision to leave the sport probably rivalled a Japanese stockbroker last Monday.

Worth, assigned by Mark McCormack's International Management Group to take responsibility for Borg's affairs, had worked with the Swede for six years. The unsuspecting agent and his family were on a two-week skiing holiday at Val d'Isère in France. One evening, when the family were sitting down to dinner at their hotel, Worth was called to the telephone. He was puzzled, having told his secretary not to give anyone his number.

It was Borg. "Peter," he said, "I've decided to quit playing the circuit. My last tournament will be Monte Carlo in April, but that's the last one."

Although Borg's refusal to commit himself to the required number of tour events in 1982 had resulted in the indignity of having to pre-qualify for tournaments, there had been no indication of early retirement.

"I don't understand, Bjorn," a shocked Worth said to his client. "You're only 26 and you've got at least another four years at the top."

"It doesn't matter," Borg

replied. "I've made my decision. I want you to talk with the others at IMG and take care of everything. But you're not to make any public announcements yet. We'll talk about that later. And remember, there's no use in trying to convince me to keep playing. I've made up my mind."

The dialogue, which Worth acknowledges to be reasonably accurate, is taken from a book on Borg written by Lars Skarke, described on the jacket as a "firm friend". Skarke, who was IMG's Swedish representative, became a partner in the ill-fated Bjorn Borg Design Group. *Winner Loses All* (Blake Publishing, 1993) is a lurid account of Borg's experiences away from the court.

Worth did endeavour to convince Borg to play on. "I spent a few months trying to persuade him," he says. "The response was always the same. 'It's no use. I've made up my mind.' The agent spent the next two years dealing with the implications of Borg's departure."

"He has said that he had thought about it for a couple years, but I don't know about that," Worth said. "It was a surprise to us. His contracts were subject to his playing tennis. There were no clauses relating to early retirement. We didn't conceive that would happen."

Borg's career prize-money amounted to \$3,609,896 (£2.4m). In 1981 he had earned more than \$4m from endorsements and in 1982, in spite of a reduced playing schedule, his revenue from advertising was around \$3m. He had long-term agreements with Donnay rackets and Fila sportswear, with whom he put pinstripes back in fashion. He was told he would be sacrificing about \$4m over the next year alone.

Borg and Worth eventually parted company. "He had had enough of me," Worth said. "We had been working together for nine years. He went his way and I went mine. From '85 to '94 we had no contact at all. Now he plays three or four events for me every year."

"Bjorn is in very good shape right now, and he moves very well," observed Lennart Bergelin, the Swedish coach who shared Borg's greatest triumphs. "Of course, if you put him with an enthusiastic youngster of 20 years old it is very difficult," Bergelin conceded, "but I'm sure he could give a lot of them a very good fight."

It gladdens Bergelin to see his former pupil back among contemporaries after courting

"I have no regrets. I had 10 great years with Mark McCormack. For some people it was business. For us it was excitement. Borg wasn't my only client." Among the others was Mats Wilander, Borg's successor as Sweden's leading player.

During what has been termed Borg's wilderness years, his personal life was often in greater turmoil than his business affairs. His first marriage, to Mariana Simionescu, the Romanian tennis player, founded and they divorced (her settlement was reportedly \$15m).

Borg had a son, Robin, by Jannike Bjorling, a children's nurse, and later developed a relationship with Loredana Berté, an Italian rock singer. In 1989, a few months before he was due to marry Berté, Borg was rushed to hospital in Milan to have his stomach pumped. His explanation (food poisoning and a few sleeping pills) conflicted with reports of a barbiturate overdose. Later that year Borg's design company was declared bankrupt.

In 1991, the 34-year-old Borg made an abortive comeback on the

regular tour, encouraged by a British guru, "Professor" Ron Thatcher, and using a wooden Donnay against synthetic modern rackets, a catapult against Magnums. Loredana Berté, who married Borg in 1989, attempted suicide and the couple were divorced in 1993.

The senior tour, co-ordinated as ever before, has rejuvenated the 41-year-old Borg, who is scheduled to renew his rivalry with McEnroe in London next Friday afternoon.

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Bjorn Borg, who has renewed old rivalries on the senior tour

Photograph: Martin Spaven/The People

BY JOHN ROBERTS



Clothes business: Bjorn Borg is a big name in upmarket underwear

Photograph: David Ashdown

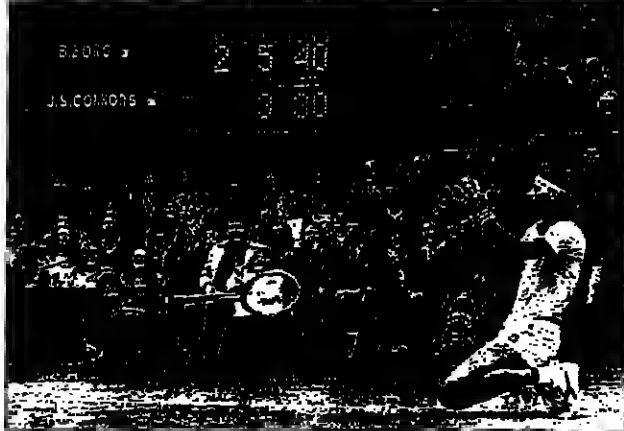
THE BORG YEARS: FIVE CLASSIC WIMBLEDON VICTORIES

Bjorn Borg won the Wimbledon men's singles championship for five consecutive years (1976-80) and was unbeaten at the All England Club in 41 matches between 1 July 1975, when he lost to Arthur Ashe in the quarter-finals, and 4 July 1981, when he was relieved of the title by John McEnroe in the final, 4-6, 7-6 (7-1), 7-6 (7-4), 6-4. John Roberts reviews a selection of some of the finest moments of Borg's reign.



1976 Borg defeated Ilie Nastase, 6-4, 6-2, 9-7 in the final.

Borg's straight-sets victory against Nastase was the culmination of two weeks' domination of Wimbledon's grass courts, which were supposed to be too fast for the young Swede's baseline game. Seeded No 4, Borg approached the championships in his customary fashion, with two weeks' practice to adjust after months on the slow clay. Nastase, the No 3 seed, suffered along with the rest, starting with Britain's David Lloyd (6-3, 6-3, 6-1), as Borg's tour de force began with seven wins without the loss of a set. The Swede's other victims were Marty Riessen, Colin Dibley, Brian Gottfried, Guillermo Vilas and Roscoe Tanner.



1978 Borg defeated Jimmy Connors in the final, 6-2, 6-2, 6-3.

Connors once vowed to trail Borg to the ends of the earth, so strong was his determination to beat the Swede. The American came close in the 1977 final, Borg winning 6-4 in the fifth set, but was further away than ever in 1978. The biggest threat to Borg's hat-trick of titles came on the opening day. With the Centre Court slick, Borg faced the punishing serves of Victor Amaya, an imposing American left-hander. Amaya led by two sets to one and had a point for 4-1 in the fourth set. Borg prevailed.

Photographs 1976, 1977, 1979 and 1980: Allsport 1978: Peter Cook/Sunday Mirror



1979 Borg defeated Roscoe Tanner in the final 6-7 (4-7), 6-1, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Borg survived two crisis points in the fifth set against Tanner, a big-serving American left-hander. Having sampled Tanner's power and retrieved a two sets to one deficit, Borg found his advance to a fourth consecutive title under threat again when serving at 4-3, 15-40. The Swede's body language gave no hint of concern and he continued to go for his shots with characteristic confidence, erasing the break points. In the second round, Borg had experienced problems when playing Vijay Amritraj on Court No 1. The Indian led by two sets to one but was denied on several break point opportunities in the fourth set.



1980 Borg defeated John McEnroe in the final, 1-6, 7-5, 6-3, 6-7 (16-18), 8-6.

The tie-break which decided the fourth set is celebrated as one of the most exciting passages in the history of the sport. During the 20-minute cameo, Borg had five championship points and saved six set points as McEnroe fought to level the contest. On the 34th point, Borg attempted a drop volley off a hard, topspin McEnroe return, and the ball fell off his racket. Borg subsequently lost the opening two points of the fifth set before banishing any doubts at 0-30 and winning all but one of his remaining service points to secure his fifth, and last, Wimbledon championship.

FACT FILE

Born: Sodertalje, Sweden, 6 June 1956.
Lives: Stockholm.
Height: 5ft 11in.
Weight: 11st 7lb.
Plays: Right-handed.
Turned pro: 1973.
Highest world ranking: No 1 (23 Aug 1977).
Career prize-money: \$3,609,896 when first retired from the Tour in 1983.
Singles titles: 62.
Singles finals: 88.
Doubles titles: 4.
Doubles finals: 8.
Grand Slam singles titles: 11.
Grand Slam record Australian Open singles:
Third round 1974 (only year played).
Singles won/lost record: 1-1.
French Open singles titles: 6 (1974-75, 1978-81).
Singles won/lost record: 49-2.
Wimbledon singles titles: 5 (1976-80).
Singles won/lost record: 51-4.
United States Open finalist: 4 (1976, 78, 80, 81).
Singles won/lost record: 40-9.

The Hall of Fame's a farce – but I'd be in if my name was Gaffé



THE
GAFFER
TAPES

Hall of Fame? Hall of Shame more like. I mean, look at some of the names they chose to put in this glorified war-work. Pele, a fair player but he couldn't handle the hard men in 1966 – or 1962 when Brazil showed they could win the World Cup without him. Cruyff, another bottler, didn't go to Argentina because he didn't like their government. No wonder he turned down those English jobs while Maggie was in charge. Puskas, I've since pictures of him and he looks a right fatty so he couldn't have been much cop. George Best, well, if it was an international hilding, boozing and getting arrested, that's not my main claim, it's the other things I've done that should have been recognised.

There was the XY formation, specially formulated for playing with 10 men. The fitness video, as used by Tottenham Hotspur. The classic camel-skin coat and matching tights. Three points for a win – it started in our Subbuteo league. Top place in the Pig & Whistle's Fantasy league two years running. I was also the first manager in the Premiership to complete my Panini World Cup collection – though Roud might have beaten me if he hadn't thought you had to buy the real-life player as well. Only last week my influence persuaded Sludgethorpe

"Any Hall of Fame that won't let you in isn't worth being in."

Mind you, I should be in. I'm a bigger legend than Ron. My playing days speak for themselves, three successful promotion campaigns, a League Cup runners-up medal and two appearances for the Football League XI when that meant something. But that's not my main claim, it's the other things I've done that should have been recognised.

Of course, if I was manager of Barcelona I'd be nicknamed El Gaffer. Not that it's likely, though I did mention to President Núñez, when I was at the Nou Camp for the Newcastle game doing TV summarising for the Playboy Channel, that Louis van Gaal had made a right pig's ear of it and English

managers were clearly good for Barcelona.

I quite fancy the Newcastle job as well, Kenny's bound to do a runner soon so that'll be available. Apparently they prefer teams to go down in a blaze of glory rather than nicking 1-0 wins. Having lost 4-3, 5-2, 6-1 and 7-0 this season I think I can safely say my team meets that criteria, better get a copy of the CV typed up just in case.

I'll have to do it myself as we've let Bridget, our latest secretary, go after some problems in Barcelona. I suggested she come along to help me with some arrangements but distinctly remember telling her that, due to the latest expenses purge, she was to book only one room.

Naturally I was disappointed to discover she had booked two rooms but understood when I discovered two of her mates had come along as well. It was the unfortunate incident involving the three of them, an emptied mini-bar, the complimentary bowl of fruit and the bell boy that convinced me she had to

go. I'm not against a bit of fun, as long as I can join in. As it is the club's being billed for all the fittings damaged when the

At least we're getting a few quid this week by loaning the Old Cornfield to the local rugby club. Apparently playing rugby at footy grounds is the trendy thing. I just hope they behave themselves. Spending all afternoon with their heads up each other's backsides seems to make these blokes behave very strangely. I've hidden my after-shave collection in case they get thirsty and Sir Hiram's locked the boardroom, we don't want hookers cavorting on the oak table, at least not until the board's Christmas party. Shaun Prouse will not be travelling with us, he has kicked a back muscle playing snooker while Ivor Niggie has heavy bruising which he said he got after he fell off while surfing the Internet.

Berry Gaffer was talking to Glenn Moore

Manchester United's Teddy Sheringham (left) celebrates his goal against Kosice with David Beckham at Old Trafford on Thursday night

Photograph: Rui Vieira/PA

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Liverpool set to challenge blocking of Friedel move

Brad Friedel was unexpectedly blocked from joining Liverpool last night when the Government turned down his work permit application.

The United States international goalkeeper was shocked to find out that his £2m move to Anfield had been stopped by the Department of Environment and Education. Liverpool are ready to take the fight to the High Court.

The Department blocked the move because it ruled that Friedel fell just below the number of caps needed to get a work permit. The guidelines state a player should have "around 75 per cent of caps in the past two years." Friedel has 71.4 per cent from playing in 10 out of the last 14 competitive games.

Ironically, Friedel has played more internationals than his American rival, Kasey Keller, who is already in the country at Leicester City.

Friedel's record was good enough for the football authorities to give the move their blessing on Monday, but the Overseas Labour Office ignored their recommendation. Portsmouth have had similar problems with an Australian keeper, Zeljko Kalac.

It is the fifth time Friedel has had a work permit application rejected. Celtic, Newcastle, Sunderland and Southampton have all failed in the past. He could go to Europe where Benfica, FSV Eintracht and Kaiserslautern are keen on him.

A department spokesman said last night: "Friedel did not meet the criteria for football in our opinion – although the club has a right to appeal."

Liverpool put out a statement last night that read: "We

find it incredible that it has taken so long for the Department to reach such an unsatisfactory conclusion. We shall take further advice on the matter once we have received written confirmation of the decision and their reasons for it."

Fulham have been blocked in their quest to field three former Premiership men for the trip to Preston today. They have spent almost £2m this week on Alan Neilson from Southampton, Paul Trollope from Derby and Steve McAuley from Bolton, but their fax to the Football League to register the trio arrived too late for them to play today.

The Coventry manager, Gordon Strachan, has put the David Burrows-Mark Pembroke exchange deal on hold. Burrows has agreed personal terms with Sheffield Wednesday – but Strachan has not yet spoken to Pembroke. Coventry hope to receive £350,000 plus Pembroke in the deal, if the Welsh international agrees terms.

Oxford United have eased their financial worries by selling their midfielder Bobby Ford to Sheffield United for £400,000. The Manor Ground club, whose debts are estimated at over £10m, put all their players up for sale a week ago.

Chris Sutton has signed a new contract with Blackburn Rovers that will keep him at the club until the summer of 2003.

The Birmingham City defender Michael Johnson is the latest British-based player who hopes to win a call-up from Jamaica for the World Cup. He was born in Nottingham but his parents were both born in Jamaica.

– Alan Nixon

Dykstra bent on keeping Celtic at bay

Siekh Dykstra, Dundee United's Dutch goalkeeper, is confident of handling the pressure and keeping his manager's blood pressure down in tomorrow's Coca-Cola Cup final against Celtic.

Dykstra admitted he blundered in gifting Henrik Larsson Celtic's second goal in the 4-0 league win the Parkhead club enjoyed last week, and has promised not to run into further trouble in the final at Ibrox.

After a week of reflection, Dykstra reckons the heavy defeat in that dress rehearsal could even benefit United as the Celtic support are certain to demand a repeat performance, which may work against Wim Jansen's side.

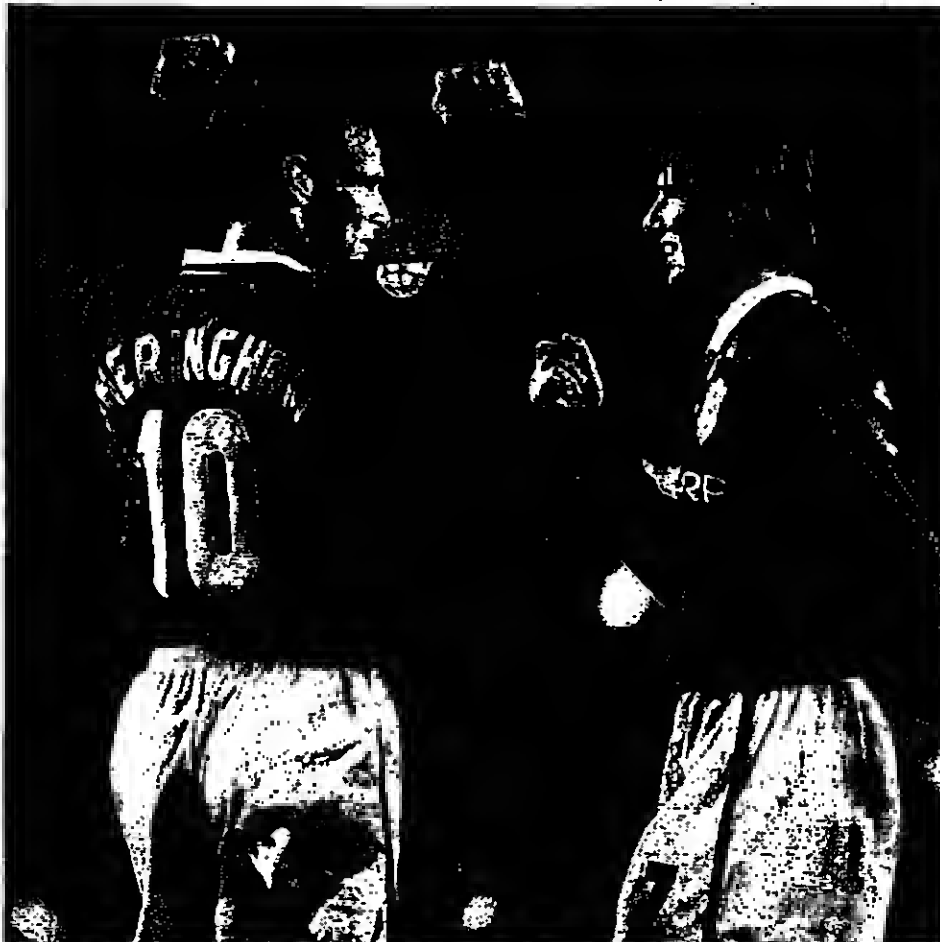
Dykstra, 31, has the odd error apart, enjoyed a consistent season for United this term and has emerged as a popular figure in a United side he rates as the best since the Tannadice for years. He said: "Ahead of last week's game, we had gained six straight victories and I think we have forgotten the result at Celtic Park already."

Talking to the players in the dressing room, the feeling is we will do well on Sunday as we have more than enough quality to beat them. The 4-0 scoreline was not a fair reflection of the match, on another day the ball would have gone in for us.

"I think it helps playing them again so quickly and the good thing about the 4-0 loss is that everybody now expects Celtic to win easily – especially their own support. That will put more pressure on Celtic."

Dykstra conceded he was unhappy with his own contribution last week at Parkhead, but refuses to let his spirits drop. "I was not too pleased with the second goal that I let in. I should have held the ball. Even after fumbling it, I would usually have got to the second ball, but it bounced off my knee and Henrik Larsson pounced. Overall this season, however, I am very happy with my form, my performances have pleased me," he said.

– Alan Nixon



Manchester United's Teddy Sheringham (left) celebrates his goal against Kosice with David Beckham at Old Trafford on Thursday night

United's position of strength

Manchester United can establish themselves as the team to beat in Europe. Martin Lipton reports.

Having achieved virtual perfection in Europe, Manchester United can turn their minds to producing something similar in the Premiership over the next four months before the Champions' Cup returns to distract them.

Thursday's effortless dismissal of Kosice should have cleared away any doubts anyone could have had over the quality of the squad Alex Ferguson now has at his command. The only question mark lingers over their ability to take chances; they missed a handful on Thursday.

United can go to Turin for

their final Group B match in 12 days' time with their quarter-final place secure but two targets in sight: they can establish themselves as the team to beat in Europe and end the challenge of the Champions' League's strongest nation. Italian sides – Milan or Juventus – have appeared in all five finals since the European Cup emerged reborn in 1992, each winning once. Now, Parma's hopes hang by the thinnest of threads after being held at home by Sparta Prague, and United can put an end to Juve's campaign by denying them in Turin.

Even if United were to lose, Juve could go out. A draw between Monaco and Bayer Leverkusen in Group F would send them both through and wins in Group D for Real Madrid and Rosenborg – at home to Porto and at Olympiakos, respectively – would do likewise for them, knocking Juve out irrespective of the result in Turin. Along with United, Germany's Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund, and the Ukraine's Dynamo Kiev are already sure of their places.

Ferguson admits the turn of events this week – set in motion by Feyenoord's win over Juve – has forced him to reassess the dangers to his team. "It's difficult to say who the main threats to us are now," he said. "There have been some shocks. It looks as if PSV could be out, too, and there could still be some more."

One thing that Ferguson thinks has made all the difference for his side this season is confidence. "Last year we had the comfort of knowing we could finish second in the group and still qualify. But this time we felt we had to be first. We've done that, and I think we've deserved it."

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United can go to Turin for

SIDELINES

When Trautmann joined County set

In the space of three years in the mid-1960s, Stockport County finished last in the League and Manchester City first. Today they meet in a First Division derby with County 13 places above City – a situation Bert Trautmann must find more bemusing than most.



THE EX-FILES

The former PoW, now retired in Germany, played 508 times in City's goal at Premiership level before sampling life at the foot of the Fourth Division as County's general manager. Curiously, Trautmann is one of numerous keepers to serve both clubs, including Steve Fleet, Alan Ogley, Ken Mulhearn (of City's title-winning side of '68), Barry Siddall, Paul Cooper and current County custodian Eric Nixon.

Stockport also have a tradition of appointing ex-City players as manager. Gary Megson is the latest in a line stretching from David Ashworth in the 1920s, through Bob Marshall before the war and Jimmy Meadows in the "Go, Go, Go County!" era Trautmann helped to launch, to Mike Summerbee and Asa Hartford in recent times.

Stuart Lee and Bill Williams made scant impact on stepping up from Edgeley Park to Maine Road, whereas County's historic role has been to take City's surplus stock, like the splendidly named Albert Emptage, David Shawcross and Ade Mike, or veterans such as Alex Hord and Roy Clarke. Hord, who partnered his son David (later of Manchester United) in County's attack, was part of City's first championship team in 1937. Typically, they went down a year later.

Ten things that Derby County's Estonian Mart Poom might be missing today



- 1 Cleaner, Singer Vinger, Metro Luminol and Roov-el Oobik. Not exotically named imports to the Estonian league, but top Baltic pop bands.
- 2 Viljandi's Drama Theatre, traditionally a venue for light farces and comedy but becoming more serious these days. Not unlike Pride Park.
- 3 Cabbage, cabbage and more cabbage. With cabbage, cabbage for afters.
- 4 The Korremia Landscape Reserve, tantalisingly advertised as "Virgin bogs and forests. Lady's slipper is a rarity here."
- 5 The plethora of wines, vodkas and other spirits the tourist board have obviously been enjoying.
- 6 Sixth century towns of unrivalled beauty.
- 7 Twentieth century towns of unrivalled concrete content.
- 8 Wrestling.
- 9 Being idle. One of the country's main selling points according to the tourist board, alongside golf and fishing, is "complete idleness."
- 10 Being occupied. By the Swedes, the Danes, the Russians, the Germans, the Russians again...

NAME OF THE GAME

No 11: COLO COLO

Happily, the most famous club in Chilean football were not an early sponsorship target by a soft-drinks company. Colo Colo were founded in 1925 by five angry members of the Magallanes team, who disagreed over the choice of a new captain and went off to form their own club. When it came to finding a name, the rebels decided that the local term for a wildcat would be most appropriate. It is not known whether every Colo Colo goal is termed a wildcat strike.

THIS WEEK

On 2 December 1911, Blackburn Rovers travelled to Manchester to continue their challenge for the First Division title.

Their opponents that day, however, were not their main championship rivals, top-of-the-table Manchester United, but the other local team, and supposed walkovers, Manchester City.

A walkover it was not. Despite being under the stewardship of captain "Cultured" Boh Crompton, an England full-back in the Graeme Le Saux mould, Blackburn lost 3-0, and even suffered the indignity of a Crompton own goal.

On the same day, Manchester United beat Newcastle 3-2, but ultimately it mattered not for Rovers. They went on to win the First Division title that season for the first time, with both United and City well behind.

THIS WEEK'S TRANSFERS

TRANSFERS: Thomas Myhr (goalkeeper) Viking Stavanger (Nor) to Everton (Nor); Steve Johnson (midfielder) to Everton (Nor); Carl Tiler (defender) to Everton (Nor); Graham Stuart (forward) Everton to Sheffield Utd (Nor); Neil Gregory (forward) Norwich to Peterborough Utd; Paul Heslop (defender) Sunderland to Scarborough; Glenn Gray (midfielder) Celtic to Morton; Derek Holmes (midfielder) Hearts to Cowden; Andy Ritchie (goalkeeper) St Johnstone to Scarborough.

Goal: Colin Hill (defender) FC Gortenberg (Swi) to Northampton (Eng); Ole Bjørn Sandager (forward) Brøndby to Middlesbrough (Eng); Carl Tiler (defender) to Everton (Nor); Carl Tiler (defender) to Everton (Nor); Graham Stuart (forward) Everton to Sheffield Utd (Nor); Neil Gregory (forward) Norwich to Peterborough Utd; Paul Heslop (defender) Sunderland to Scarborough; Glenn Gray (midfielder) Celtic to Morton; Derek Holmes (midfielder) Hearts to Cowden; Andy Ritchie (goalkeeper) St Johnstone to Scarborough.

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Miller aiming to prove a point

Alan Miller, West Bromwich Albion's man of the moment, will run out at the Riverside Stadium today with a point to prove to Middlesbrough's manager, Bryan Robson.

Miller insists the game is not a grudge match against the club which sold him in Albion for a bargain £400,000 in March, but admits he was deeply disappointed with the way his career on Teesside turned out.

The London-born goalkeeper made an immediate impact as a key part of the Middlesbrough side which powered to the First Division title in 1995, but he lost his place in the team once they had moved into the Premiership.

He was then allowed to go to Albion, first on loan and then in a £400,000 move. That has

proved to be a master stroke by Ray Harford, with Miller producing 14 clean sheets in 32 games.

Miller said: "I was desperately disappointed after working hard and gaining promotion. That was the highlight of my career. But not getting a run of games after that was upsetting because without that you can't get your form together. If I am honest about things, that period made me find things out about myself. It was good for my attitude to training and to football in general."

"At Middlesbrough, the highs were high and the lows were very low. I couldn't really understand some of the things that went on there. I think the manager was under a lot of pressure to cut wages."

Jaime Moreno may have to wait for his chance to impress in his second spell at Middlesbrough. The Bolivian international striker is keen to help Boro's push for promotion after returning to the Riverside after a spell with Washington DC Utd, but Robson feels he may not yet be ready.

Craig Hignett has not broken his collar bone as was first feared but he has strained tendons in his shoulder and will miss the game with West Bromwich. Anthony Ormerod will replace Hignett.

Darreo Williams has recovered from a head wound to retain his place in an unchanged Sunderland side for the home game against Tranmere. Michael Gray has also recovered from a groin injury.

Huddersfield's leading scorer, Marcus Stewart, returns after hamstring trouble to form a £2m partnership with Wayne Allison for the first time when Bury visit the McAlpine Stadium.

The Birmingham City midfielder Martin Grainger starts a three-game ban and will miss the home match against Portsmouth. The central defender Darren Wassall will have a late fitness check on his ankle injury.

The Portsmouth striker Mathias Svensson is expected to make his first appearance in two months and the Jamaican international Paul Hall and Fitzroy Simpson return. Terry Fenwick's side will be without their Australians, Craig Foster, John Aloisi and Robbie Enes, who are needed for the World Cup qualifier against Iran.

Superior Stockport relish fallen neighbours' visit

Stockport play Manchester City in the league for the first time in 87 years today and will relish their superior position as they go into the game.

While County lie seventh in the First Division, their mighty neighbours from seven miles up the A6 are 20th and struggling. The ex-City contingent at Edgeley Park, including the manager, Gary Megson, and goalkeeper, Eric Nixon, who both had spells at Maine Road in better days, intend to make the most of the encounter.

"I followed City as a lad and then played for them," Nixon said. "Obviously I've got a soft spot for them but make no mistake, I'll be doing all I can to take a clean sheet."

Megson, who said he always thought City fans believed he lacked the skill to play for their team, is no less determined.

"City are a huge club with huge support and they're only just up the road," he said. "But I've got no real interest in them. To tell you the truth, I'm only interested in what Stockport are doing."

County expect to name the side that won at Crewe last week, with Sean Connolly having fully recovered from a back injury.

Frank Clark, the City manager, said: "We are going there in good heart after our last two games [a win and a draw]. We know this will be a tough one, we are under no illusions about that."

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Leonhardtsen eager to battle as Liverpool go for broke

Liverpool play Arsenal tomorrow and Manchester United next Saturday in a make or break week for their title challenge.

Can they change from being infuriatingly fickle to consistent match winners? A fully committed Oyvind Leonhardtsen is in no doubt.

So much for the Spice Boys image. The Liverpool players had been given the day off, the weather was dank and uninviting, but Melwood was packed instead of isolated. Steve McManaman and Robbie Fowler practised shooting, Jamie Redknapp was alone flicking the ball from foot to foot, creating circles of precision in the misty air.

In the distance two figures shot repeatedly against a wooden wall. One, Bjorn Kvamme, was tall, every inch a professional footballer, but the other had a smaller, almost boyish physique. He could have been a teenager, his mind seeing Wembley or Anfield instead of darkened timber. Over and over again, left foot, right foot, volley, chip.

Every boy with a shred of football ambition has been there and Oyvind Leonhardtsen certainly had. "Just like when I was a kid," he said, smiling at the memory. A Norwegian kid whose television heroes in those days wore the red shirt he now wears. Maybe Kenny Dalglish also drilled against Melwood's wooden walls. Leonhardtsen would hope so.

It is a big season for a mid-field player whose build and willingness to work reminds the Kop of a latter day left-sided Ray Houghton. It began with a £3.5m move from Wimbledon and will culminate in the World Cup finals, a season that, in League terms, will probably hinge on the next seven days.

Liverpool, the great enigmas of the Premiership, face Arsenal tomorrow at Highbury and Manchester United next Saturday at Anfield knowing that successive defeats will make the runners-up spot and the Champions' League an unlikely carrot never mind the ultimate domestic prize.

No one has a clue whether they will succeed. Roy Evans no more than the rest of us. Brilliant or awful, deadly or profligate, the team slip from one to the other without a join. There have been some glorious performances since Evans became manager in January 1994, but there have been achingly frustrating ones, too, the most stark in the memory being Strasbourg away and Barnsley at home.

The next seven days could undo a lot of the damage in the Premiership and the players

know it. Which is why they forsook their day of leisure to go to the training ground at Melwood. Neil Ruddock, Mark Wright, Rob Jones, Jason McAteer all sweating when they could have been in bed. Who says they do not care?

"We do care," Leonhardtsen said. "The fact we're here shows everyone is trying. Consistency has been a problem for years now, and if we knew why we'd probably be champions. All you can do is work as hard as you can and try to get it right. It hasn't happened yet but we're training even on our days off to be the best."

"I've been doing ball work, developing skills. Even at 30 years old you can still learn things if you're prepared to try."

Perhaps if Leonhardtsen, 27, had been fit at the start of the season, Liverpool would not have made such a lethargic start. Eager, energetic, he was at the vanguard of a Norwegian invasion of the Premiership when he arrived at Wimbledon for £600,000 in December 1994 after helping Rosenborg to a third successive Norwegian title.

For two and-a-half years he personified the Wimbledon craft-with-graft ethos, an uncouth jewel among many polished in south London. He is, Joe Kin-

Sunday's match. Now it's hard. Two big games and we need at least four points from them.

"We know we're capable of doing it. You have to be positive. Even against Barnsley we didn't play particularly well but we created a lot of chances. That's the positive side to the game, we could have won. At least we know we are creating enough to score even on bad days. We have to forget that game and look forward to Arsenal."

In other words, his new side are infuriatingly fickle. Coming from the overachievers, Wimbledon, to the underachievers of Anfield, Leonhardtsen should be better placed than anyone to put his finger on Liverpool's erratic nature but his answer is a familiar one: pressure.

"The training methods are not very different, but you don't have the pressure at Wimbledon. Each week they stay in the Premiership is an achievement for them. When they are playing big clubs like Liverpool, United or Arsenal they're just happy with every point they can get. It's easier being the underdog."

"Here we know we have to win every game and it's a big difference. If Wimbledon lose three games in a row it's not a crisis, everyone says 'yes, that's typical'. At Liverpool people would want to know what's wrong. There's great expectation, it's something you have to live with. It's one of the reasons I came here."

There was also the call of his youth in Kristiansund - the small Norwegian town where Manchester United's Ole Gunnar Solskjaer also hails from - and watching Liverpool matches on television. "I always loved English football. It was so fast and exciting and the crowds created a great atmosphere. It's end to end which I thought would suit my style of play."

Wimbledon thought so, too, and now Liverpool, where he has been given a left-flank role rather than the central midfield one he would prefer. "It's my favourite position," he agreed. "Sometimes I feel I could do more there. You can get isolated on the wing and I feel I'd do better if I began my runs from a more central position. My inclination is to cut inside rather than out, but I'm adapting. I feel it's going well. The competition is so strong here I'm happy just to play."

"Leo", as his team-mates call him - his Wimbledon nickname was "Rigsby" - left Melwood to go house hunting. No beers, no carousing, no modelling. Vinny Jones, in his infamous newspaper column once described him as "boring", which in professional football speak means he is admired for his application and ambition.

"It's very special to be with Liverpool," he said, "but I want to win something. I didn't come here just for the sake of it. I believe we can. The season is still young." The next seven days will decide if Liverpool's is going to age prematurely.

BY GUY
HODGSON

near, agrees: "One of the best players I've ever signed."

Rob Jones, Liverpool's right-back, has played with and against him. "He never stops running," he said. "He's a busy player and he's hard to mark because he's here and there, moving all the time. Unless you're careful he'll get into positions you don't expect and, for a mid-fielder, he scores a lot of goals. A team need a player who will sit in midfield and another who goes and he does that for us."

Or at least he has since he shook off a hamstring strain - "the longest injury I've ever had" - to make his Premiership debut for the club of his boyhood heart, scoring against Derby on 25 October. Things would be promising if only Liverpool could lose the capacity to shoot themselves in the foot.

"It's always difficult away in Europe, but when we saw Strasbourg at home we couldn't believe we had lost 3-0 to them in France," Leonhardtsen said. "We were a bit unlucky that night, but that's easy to say afterwards."

And Barnsley? "We just can't afford to lose at home to teams like them," he replied. "We've made it very difficult for ourselves. If we'd won that match we'd have been right up behind the leaders. We'd have been looking good going into



Liverpool's Oyvind Leonhardtsen: 'Consistency has been a problem for years and if we knew why we'd probably be champions' Photograph: Empics

Reluctant caretakers simply cannot clean up

Poor old Chris Hughton, he was even less in demand than a Spurs season ticket on Monday after "his" side had succumbed to Crystal Palace (apparently, several fans nailed their season tickets to the club shop wall after the game; having drowned their sorrows they returned to find someone had nicked the nails but left the tickets).

The Spurs caretaker manager arrived belatedly at the post-match press conference to find only the tea ladies left to hear what he had to say, which couldn't have been much since he was only in the job 24 hours.

Caretaker managers are invariably thrust reluctantly under the spotlight - Tony Parkes, for example, looks as though saying boo to a goose would be beyond him - and Hughton, a capable full-back in his day but never one to court the limelight, resembled a rabbit caught in headlights when quizzed beforehand about his team selection.

There was a sense of déjà vu about the whole affair since it was exactly three years ago that the former Spurs defender Steve Perryman was given one game in charge to stake his claim on the post vacated by Ossie Ardiles.

In the event, Spurs lost 2-0 and a disillusioned Perryman left to coach in Norway. But who'd be a caretaker manager anyway. It's got to be the most undesirable job in football because let's face it, a caretaker manager is onto a loser whichever way you look at it. Win - and it is down to the players; he'd inherited a decent enough team anyway. Lose - and he obviously wasn't up to the job in the first place.

Not that either scenario bothered caretaker manager extraordinaire Parkes. He took charge at Blackburn after Ray Harford's resignation last October with Rovers rock bottom and without a Premiership win. By May, they were a creditable 13th having lost just eight games. Had Parkes been up for the job he'd have had a good case.

But he wasn't; he'd made that clear from the outset, unlike John Hollins who has taken every possible opportunity to broadcast his desire for the vacant manager's seat at Queen's Park Rangers, which he's currently keeping warm.

Unfortunately for Hollins, QPR have been linked with every unattached manager going (as well as plenty of attached ones) so he might have to be content with the caretaker



OLIVIA
BLAIR
ON THE
SHORT STRAW
DRAWN BY
STAND-IN
MANAGERS

manager's job at Harchester Rovers in Sky's new *Dream Team* soap now that Ron Atkinson has abandoned acting in favour of real life drama at Sheffield Wednesday where he has as his right-hand man the season's most successful caretaker manager (to date).

Peter Shreeves, for whom the phrase right-hand man was surely invented, was in the Hillsborough hut seat when Wednesday thrashed Bolton 5-1 after a disastrous run which had prompted David Pleat's dismissal. While not wanting to take anything away from Shreeves, the reality is

that the Wednesday players were under less pressure to perform than when Pleat was in the firing line.

Ditto those Nottingham Forest players who hadn't managed to win in 17 games for Frank Clark last season yet beat then second-placed Arsenal in Stuart Pearce's first game as caretaker manager. It obviously had something to do with Psycho's leadership qualities, but not that much.

Clark, of course, went to Maine Road where one of his first acts was to hand P45s to several of the backroom staff, among them the club stalwart Tony Book. The manager for five years (from 1974-79), he was also caretaker manager three times, bailing City out after Ron Saunders left in 1974; in 1989 when Mel Machin went; and again in 1990 following Howard Kendall's departure, prompting a former team-mate to say: "When the holocaust comes I want to be standing next to Bookie." Perhaps Book's motto should have been "Once more into the breach..." since this is Manchester City after all.

Perhaps the highest profile caretaker manager's job of them all went to another former City manager, Joe Mercer, who was given seven

games at England's helm in May 1974 before Don Revie was appointed. Mercer's record was a creditable one - won three, drawn three, lost one - but that defeat came against Scotland in the Home Championships.

One thing, however, characterises all caretaker managers - they know there is a replacement waiting in the wings, or even in the stands, as Christian Gross was at White Hart Lane on Monday. At least Gross stayed there; two days earlier Keith Burkinshaw was in charge of Aberdeen (where he's director of football) for a game but found his expertise somewhat undermined by the appearance in the dug-out at half-time of the Dons' manager-in-waiting, Alex Miller. Even with two managers overseeing events, Aberdeen could only manage a 1-1 draw against Dunfermline.

But then Spurs legend Danny Blanchflower reckoned that great teams don't need managers, caretaker or otherwise. "Brazil," he said, "won the World Cup playing exhilarating football with a manager they'd had for three weeks, and what about Real Madrid at their greatest? You can't even remember who the manager was."

Flat season that makes you cry into your pint

A season is like a drinking session and this one has so far brought on a severe case of delirium tremens. Just as it takes the correct personnel for a good drinking session, so in the same way, at the start of each season we look to our team and ask: have we the players who can do the job?

The second requirement is good beer, preferably slow-settling pints of Guinness. The football equivalent is skill. It is also essential that there are no ulterior motives beyond enjoying a good session. In terms of a team, what we are talking about here is commitment.

Most importantly, a good session needs no time restrictions or any other limitations. It must have the potential for development. So with a football team - provided there is some sign of progress, at least we have hope.

So how has it been at Manchester City so far, in terms of personnel, skill, commitment and potential?

Lee Bradbury looked likely to solve our scoring problem. Gerard Wickens promised to be a creative force in midfield, and Tony Vaughan was rated one of the most promising defenders in the First Division.

But no - Bradbury and Vaughan are the footballing equivalent of the lad who

starts puking after the first pint and spends the evening on the porcelain 'phone.

Wickens is the character who starts with a good few yards, gets maudlin and withdraws for the rest of the night staring into his pint.

Georgi Kinkladze is the man who has a wealth of anecdotes but who, because no one laughs at his first joke, refuses to tell any more because his audience is not worthy of him.

The personnel are sadly

FAN'S EYE
VIEW
NO 234
MANCHESTER
CITY
BY
JOE O'NEILL

deficient. What about that vital lubricant, skill?

Kinkladze is the freshly brewed pint, lovingly coaxed from the pumps. But he, too, is temperamental and the slightest unfavourable condition can disturb his delicate equilibrium. If things are not right, he turns into one of those alcopops, all flashy outer show with little substance. His work-rate has compared unfavourably with that of Homer Simpson.

Tony Scully and Wickens apart, the skill level of the others is the equivalent of mild into which a disreputable landlord has dumped the previous night's slops.

And commitment? Paul Dickov is exempt from any criticism because his dedication to the cause is beyond question. Wickens, Kit Symons, Scully and Barry Conlon cannot be faulted for effort. But the rest make things go with a swing in the same way that a pickling jar of cirrhosis-riddled liver would aid the sale of hard liquor.

Is there any hope? Any pattern of play developing? Any emerging stars?

Scully and Conlon have potential, Michael Brown and Jeff Whitley have promise, but the team are changed every week, tactics altered virtually every match.

Denis Smith, the manager of Oxford United, said a point against City was a poor result. At first outraged, I realised that the League table and the match itself showed that he is right. That, more than the fact that such giants as Stockport, Crewe, Bury and Bradford are above us, is the true indication of our present position.

This session has already become a wake. This season, young as it is, is already dead.

27/FOOTBALL

Self-styled elite obliged to justify their grand claims

Phil Shaw looks at a weekend of Premiership action that presents the Big Five with vastly differing challenges, while Nick Harris (below) analyses the programme match by match.

Five years after they helped to form the Big Five and became prime movers in setting up the Premiership, the powers of Merseyside and north London tangle this weekend. Portentous as the games at Goodison Park and Highbury may prove, a home victory at Old Trafford would strengthen the suspicion that Manchester United are now in a league of their own: the Big One.

By virtually any criterion - resources, revenue, squad depth, silverware, support - United have left their rivals standing. The only area in which their pre-eminence is not currently pronounced is points. A lead of one offers second-placed Blackburn Rovers the opportunity to take over at the top by beating them tomorrow.

Unfortunately for all who prefer a race to a procession, Alex Ferguson's team give the impression of being ready to accelerate away from their place in the Champions' League quarter-finals is secure. Even when amassing 26 goals in six games, United have seemed to be holding something in reserve.

Blackburn, in contrast, were stretched to the limit in scraping past Everton and Chelsea, and will need to scale new heights just to stay with the champions. They have not won at United for 35 years and boast a solitary, Alan Shearer-inspired success in the 17 ensuing encounters.

They have, however, run them sufficiently close in this fixture (two draws, two 1-0 defeats in the last four) to en-

courage optimism. What is more, Tim Flowers is playing better than any keeper in the country, and Chris Sutton is in the kind of form that could exploit Gary Pallister's increasing vulnerability.

But even allowing for the tactical nous of Roy Hodgson, who is arguably outstripping Arsène Wenger as the most astute coach to come to England from abroad, it may not be enough. Hodgson is taking only his 16th Premiership match, against a mere 443 for Ferguson, and is likely to be left to reflect on the afternoon as part of his learning curve.

No such luxuries for Howard Kendall. Before Everton overcame Liverpool, he said the derby was "the easy one - what happens afterwards

is the key". What has happened is a sequence of defeats which mean they receive Tottenham as the bottom club.

Everton's incentive is not unlike Blackburn's. By seeing off Spurs they could trade places with them, and on Christian Gross's debut as manager to boot. The Swiss showed a historical bent when he flourished names like Harry Hotspur and the Earl of Northumberland, yet he may be unaware of positive auguries from the more recent past.

In the autumn of 1958, Bill Nicholson took charge of an ailing Spurs for the first time... against Everton. They triumphed by no less than 10-4 and within three years the Double came to White Hart Lane. Peter Shreeves also

launched his reign with an astounding victory over Everton, 4-1 away on the first day of 1984-85, even if it was Kendall who won the title.

The way Everton's season has gone, survival would represent success for a club whose badge decrees that nothing but the best is good enough. Anything less than three points may provoke protests against the chairman, Peter Johnson, who dug himself into a deeper hole with ill-judged criticism of supporters this week.

By their neighbours' standards, Liverpool are hardly in crisis. But Anfield compares itself with Old Trafford; humiliation by Barnsley left them nine points adrift, effectively turning tomorrow's match at Arsenal and the visit of Uni-

ted a week today into 180 minutes which could make or break both their season and Roy Evans' managerial tenure.

Arsenal, having sandwiched a fortuitous win over United between surrenders at Derby and Sheffield, also face a test of their resilience. Dennis Bergkamp's return could be the spark they need - Ian Wright looked forlorn without him - whereas Liverpool have Robbie Fowler and Paul Ince suspended when they need them most.

While the financial clout of Chelsea and Newcastle would conceivably put them in an updated Big Five, only by winning the big one, the championship, would their membership look anything more than transitory. Chelsea, who take on Derby in a match likely to have a strong

Italian influence, crept into third place in midweek, but with five defeats already can afford to lose three more at most to have any hope of finishing top.

Newcastle's could move to within a point of the leaders if they won their games in hand. Their prospects of doing so might be brighter if Kenny Dalglish, knowing he had lost Alan Shearer, had not hastily offloaded Les Ferdinand and Peter Beardsley.

Crystal Palace's failure to win at home since April offers Newcastle hope on their retreat from Catalonia. Nevertheless, to study Palace's away record, which is comfortably the best in the Premiership, is to be reassured in this era of self-proclaimed elites that small can still be bountiful.

Barnsley v Leeds

Radcliffe 6
Last season: No fixture

Barnsley manager Danny Wilson has a fully-fit squad to choose from for the first time this season, with the exception of long-term casualties Neil Thompson and Steve Davis. Winger Andy Liddell has recovered from an ankle injury and is fit. Wilson is likely to name an unchanged line-up for the Yorkshire derby from the side that beat Liverpool 1-0 last week, although Adie Moses could make way in midfield for Jovo Bosancic. Barnsley are looking for only their second home win of the season.

Leeds will again be without captain David Hopkin and teenage striker Harry Kewell. Midfielder Hopkin is serving the second game of a three-match ban after accruing five bookings, while Kewell is on international duty in Australia for the World Cup play-off second leg with Iran. Teenage goalkeeper Paul Robinson will again act as understudy for Nigel Martyn as Mark Beesley remains unavailable with a hamstring injury. Leeds could move, at least temporarily into the top three for the first time this season if they win.

Bolton v Wimbledon

Blake 6
Last season: No fixture

Chris Fairclough could make a Premiership return after a seven-month absence for Bolton today. Full-back Fairclough, who suffered knee ligament damage on the last day of last season, was Wanderers' only present last season and has undergone a lengthy recovery programme since Bolton re-entered the top flight. Scott Sellers returns after a three-match suspension, but defender Gerry Taggart is still serving a ban. Dean Holdsworth faces his former club for the first time.

Wimbledon face a Bolton side that beat them in the Coca-Cola Cup earlier this season. Midfielder Robbie Earle, who lost his place in the side when he went on international duty with Jamaica, may return to the starting line-up. If he does, it is likely to be in the place of Carl Hughes, who is due to start a three-match ban next week. Defender Alan Kimble may also start after recovering from a hamstring injury, while Efan Ekoku is hoping to have recovered from a twisted ankle. Norwegian Stole Solbakken could play.

Chelsea v Derby

Valli 10
Last season: 3-1

Ruud Gullit's squad system will be tested today. Eddie Newton (broken toe) and Graeme Le Saux (arm) are both definitely out. Steve Clarke (calf), Mark Nicholls (groin), Andy Myers (heel) and Tore Andre Flo (foot) are all on the doubtful list, although Frenchman Bernard Lamboire is available again after suspension. Frank Leboeuf, who missed Wednesday's 2-0 win over Everton with a groin problem, should be fit, and Mark Hughes is likely to partner Gianfranco Zola up front with Gianluca Vialli reverting to the bench. Derby captain Igor Stimac will not return for the Rams until next week after nearly two months out with an acute back injury. The 30-year-old Croatian defender was back in training this week but is not ready to replace the Dane Jacob Laursen, who will be out for several weeks with a knee injury. With Stimac's return delayed, Dean Yates will make his first Premiership appearance of the season after recovering from a knee tendon injury. Paulo Vancoppe will again lead the attack that helped beat Coventry 3-1 last week.

Coventry v Leicester

Dublin 8
Last season: 0-0

Coventry's Darren Huckerby is back to full fitness for today. Former England Under-21 striker Huckerby has been struggling for weeks with ankle and thigh injuries but is now fully recovered. Willie Boland is expected to replace Paul Williams in midfield while David Burrows keeps his place despite being on the verge of a move to Sheffield Wednesday. Coventry are looking to avoid the same result as their last Midlands derby - last week's 3-1 defeat at Derby. Undefeated at home this season, they have drawn six of eight at Highfield Road. Striker Emile Heskey is suspended for Leicester. Midfielder Garry Parker has not trained all week due to the illness of his prematurely born daughter, and is very unlikely to play. Pontus Kaarmark is suffering from a mystery illness which could open up a place in the starting line-up for youngster Stuart Wilson. This Midlands derby has place under a superstition Leicester will hope to end - Coventry midfielder Gary McAllister has never been on a losing side against the Foxes in the seven years since he left Fibert Street.

Crystal Palace v Newcastle

Shirley Lomax 3
Last season: No fixture

Andy Roberts needed stitches in his instep following Monday's 1-0 victory over Spurs at White Hart Lane, but he should play in that game, but trained yesterday and is fit. Steve Coppell is likely to name an unchanged side as Palace still seek their first home win of the season (apart from the "away" win against Wimbledon on their shared ground). Neil Smith is the "away" win against Wimbledon on their shared ground. Newcastle are likely to be without centre-back Darren Peacock who injured an ankle in the Champions' League defeat at Barcelona, while captain Rob Lee might recover from a virus which kept him out of that game. Faustino Asprilla is still short of match fitness and unlikely to feature, but John Beresford and Steve Watson seem to have recovered from knocks. Newcastle will be lifted by the return of Northern Ireland winger Keith Gillespie who missed out in Barcelona, serving a one-match ban after yellow cards in Europe.

...And statistics

How the first blow usually leads to a knockout

Managers often talk about the importance of the first goal. No wonder: statistics show that in recent seasons there has been only a one in 10 chance of a Premiership side scoring first and going on to lose the match.

Over the years the figures have been remarkably consistent, with between 10 and 11 per cent of matches being won by sides that have gone behind. Last season only 33 out of 380 Premiership matches finished this way.

Not surprisingly, the chances of teams recovering to win are even smaller when playing away from home. This season only four teams have won away games after going behind: West Ham at Barnsley on the opening day of the season, and Wimbledon at Barnsley, Arsenal at Chelsea and Derby at Sheffield Wednesday all in September.

In contrast, three Premiership matches last weekend alone saw home sides fight back to win after trailing. Aston Villa beating Everton, Newcastle overcoming Southampton and Leeds producing a stirring revival to beat West Ham 3-1.

The pattern goes back many years. As long ago as the 1964-65 season the Foot-

ball Association analysed 1,000 matches to discover the effect of the first goal. The survey showed that 10 per cent of home teams lost games after taking the lead, while nearly a quarter of away sides did so.

Of the 133 "first goals" scored this season, 76 have been scored by home teams: 58 have gone on to win, 13 to draw and only four to lose. Of the 57 scored by away teams, 36 have gone on to win, 10 to draw and 11 to lose.

West Ham are the team with the worst record for hanging on to a lead. Harry Redknapp's side have lost three of the seven matches in which they have gone in front this season. Chelsea, Derby, Barnsley and Everton have all lost twice in such circumstances, though Chelsea and Derby - who meet today at Stamford Bridge - have the best records for scoring the first goal.

No clues for guessing which team have never lost a Premiership game in which they have taken the lead. Manchester United have played 217 Premiership matches and have never gone on to lose a game - home or away - in which they have gone in front.

Effect of the first goal: Premiership 1997-98

Games played	Times lead taken	Goals on to	Win	Draw	Loss	Matches won after conceding first goal
Chelsea	15	12	9	2	1	1
Derby	14	10	6	2	2	1
Blackburn	14	10	6	2	2	1
Liverpool	14	9	6	3	0	0
Manchester United	15	8	5	3	0	2
Arsenal	15	8	5	3	0	2
Newcastle	12	8	5	2	1	1
Crystal Palace	14	7	5	2	0	0
West Ham	15	6	4	0	2	0
Leeds	15	6	6	0	0	2
Wimbledon	15	6	4	0	0	0
Wimbledon	15	6	4	2	0	1
Sheff Wed	15	6	4	0	2	0
Barnsley	15	6	4	0	2	0
Coventry	15	6	2	2	2	0
Sutton	15	5	4	0	1	1
Sheff Wed	15	4	2	1	0	0
Bolton	14	4	2	1	1	0
Everton	15	1	2	0	2	0
Aston Villa	15	3	3	0	0	2



Stokeley: Brian Sears

Taking the lead: the last three seasons

Games	Times scored first goal	Win	Draw	Loss
(Games with a first goal in brackets)		(Percentage in brackets)		
1997-98	146 (133)	95 (72)	23 (17)	15 (11)
Of which home side scored first goal	76	59 (78)	13 (17)	4 (5)
Of which away side scored first goal	57	36 (63)	10 (18)	11 (19)
1995-97	380 (338)	228 (60)	78 (23)	33 (10)
1995-96	380 (353)	244 (64)	71 (20)	38 (11)

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: HOW THEY STAND

	Pt	Pts	GD	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Form	Upcoming matches
2 Blackburn	6	30	+14	5	2	1	17	9	3	4	0	10	4	WWDWW	6 Dec Bolton (H); 9 Dec Arsenal (A); 12 Dec West Ham (H); 15 Dec Sheff Wed (H)
4 Arsenal	5	27	+8	5	2	0	18	3	2	4	2	12	4	DDLWL	6 Dec Newcastle (A); 9 Dec Blackburn (H); 12 Dec Wimbledon (A); 15 Dec Leicester (H)
6 Derby	4	23	+8	5	1	0	17	5	2	0	5	10	4	DLWLW	6 Dec West Ham (H); 9 Dec Bolton (A); 12 Dec Newcastle (A); 15 Dec Crystal Palace (H)
8 Liverpool	4	22	+11	5	0	2	18	6	1	4	2	7	8	LWDWL	6 Dec Man Utd (H); 9 Dec Crystal Palace (A); 12 Dec Coventry (H); 15 Dec Leeds (H)
10 C Palace	4	19	-1	0	3	3	4	9	5	1	2	10	6	LDWDW	3 Dec West Ham (A); 6 Dec Leicester (A); 9 Dec Derby (H); 12 Dec Arsenal (A)
12 Aston Villa	5	18	-6	3	1	3	8	12	2	2	4	7	9	LDLDW	6 Dec Coventry (H); 9 Dec Man Utd (A); 12 Dec Southampton (H); 15 Dec Tottenham (H)
14 Southampton	5	16	-5	4	1	3	8	10	1	0	6	5	6	LWWWL	7 Dec Wimbledon (A); 9 Dec Leicester (H); 12 Dec Aston Villa (A); 15 Dec Crystal Palace (A)
16 Sheff Wed	5	15	-10	4	1	3	5	12	0	2	5	10	23	LLWW	8 Dec Barnsley (H); 11 Dec West Ham (A); 14 Dec Derby (H); 17 Dec Leeds (H)
18 Bolton	4	13	-11	1	4	1	3	3	1	3	4	7	18	LWDL	Monday Newcastle (H); 6 Dec Blackburn (A); 9 Dec Derby (H); 12 Dec Leeds (A)
20 Everton	5	12	-9	3	1	3	11	11	0	2	6	5	4	WDLWL	8 Dec Leeds (A); 11 Dec Wimbledon (H); 14 Dec Derby (H); 17 Dec Man Utd (A)

FAIR PLAY LEAGUE

Rank	Goals	Red	Yellow	Pts	Av
1 G Willard	5	3	24	48	6.20
2 S Dunn	1	23	28	580	3.20
3 M Reed	5	23	28	580	3.20
4 P Dutton	10	2	42	520	5.20
5 G Poll	3	30	45	500	5.00
6 O Ellery	8	1	32	483	6.04
7 J Winter	2	31	41	456	6.04
8 G Ashby	9	1	31	36	4.50
9 P Alcock	7	0	30	30	4.29
10 G Barber	8	1	29	34	4.25
11 P Jones	7	2	19	29	4.14
12 M Bodenham	7	0	27	27	3.58
13 N Barry	2	1	24	22	3.88
14 D Gallagher	9	22	22	32	3.58
15 M Riley	7	1	29	24	3.43
16 J Harris	0	0	27	27	3.38
17 A Wicks	8	1	21	26	3.25
18 K Burge	0	0	23	23	2.88
19 S Lodge	9	0	19	19	2.11

UNFAIR PLAY LEAGUE

Rank	Goals	Red	Yellow	Pts	Av
1 Bolton	14	3	23	32	3.21
2 Everton	15	3	32	47	3.88
3 Chelsea	15	3	27	42	2.80
4 Arsenal	16	1	34	38	2.80
5 Sheff Wed	15	2	25	38	2.40
6 Coventry	15	1	31	36	2.40
7 Blackburn	15	2	25	35	2.33
8 C Palace	15	7	29	34	2.27
9 Leeds	15	1	28	33	2.20
10 West Ham	15	0	31	31	2.07
11 Liverpool	14	1	22	27	1.93
12 Derby	15	0	29	29	1.93
13 Newcastle	12	1	16	21	1.75
14 Tottenham	15	1	20	25	1.67
15 Southampton	15	0	25	25	1.67
16 Man Utd	15	0	24	24	1.60
17 Wimbledon	15	0	24	24	1.60
18 Aston Villa	15	1	16	21	1.40
19 Leicester	15	1	17	22	1.47
20 Barnsley	15	0	21	21	1.40

LEADING SCORERS

1	Harrison (West Ham)	14
2	Cole (Manchester United)	13
3	Bergkamp (Arsenal)	12
4	Sutton (Blackburn)	11
5=	Davies (Southampton)	10
	Wendoppe (Derby)	10
	Vialli (Chelsea)	10
8	Balano (Derby)	9
	Wright (Arsenal)	9
	Sherringham (Manchester United)	9
	Wallace (Leeds)	9
12	Dublin (Coventry)	8
	Gallacher (Blackburn)	8
	Fowler (Liverpool)	8
15	Carbone (Sheffield Wednesday)	7

Everton v Tottenham

Cadnam 5
Last season: 1-0

Everton are likely to give a debut to Norwegian Under-21 international goalkeeper Thomas Myrhe, signed this week from Viking Stavanger. Neville Southall is struggling with a back injury. Howard Kendall must also decide whether to recall promising youngsters Danny Cadamarteri and John Ooster to the starting line-up. The newcomer from Sheffield United, Mitch Ward, is likely to keep a midfield place after his debut in the 2-0 midweek defeat at Chelsea, while fellow ex-Blade Carl Tiler may be given a debut today.

Spurs are likely to drop David Ginola, after the 1-0 home defeat by Crystal Palace last Monday. Christian Gross's preferred 4-4-2 system is less than ideal for Ginola's preferred free role behind the strikers. Strikers Chris Armstrong and Jose Dominguez are still injured, leaving an opening alongside Les Ferdinand for either Steffen Versen or Rory Allen. Gary Mabbutt and Clive Wilson have been recalled to the squad, together with Ruel Fox and Colin Calderwood. Spurs have lost four Premiership matches in a row, as have Everton.

Southampton v Sheff Wed

Derby 10
Last season: 2-3

Southampton have Egil Osterstad available, probably as a substitute, following a six-week absence with an ankle problem. Saints manager Dave Jones has a fully fit squad to choose from, but new signing Bjorn Johansen will not arrive from Norway until next week. The Saints are hoping to recover from two defeats, against Newcastle and Chelsea in the Premiership and Coca-Cola Cup respectively. Jones will probably start with David Hirst and Kevin Davies up front. Sheffield Wednesday manager Ron Atkinson is likely to name an unchanged line-up from the side that won last weekend 2-0 over Arsenal. A swap deal involving Coventry's David Burrows and Welsh international Mark Pembroke failed to beat yesterday's noon deadline, but although Pembroke is still available, Atkinson has drafted Lee Briscoe into the squad. He could turn to the 22-year-old instead if he chooses to omit Pembroke. Atkinson is reunited with two former Owls who have played under his management: Carlton Palmer and David Hirst.

West Ham v Aston Villa

Harrison 14
Last season: 0-2

West Ham are not yet able to recall former Newcastle striker Paul Kison following surgery to repair a torn groin muscle, but he is nearly fit. Abou Samassi or Paulo Alves will continue to deputise. Harry Redknapp must decide whether to keep faith with fit-again goalkeeper Ludek Miklosko who returned from injury at Leeds on Sunday, as a surprise replacement for in-form Canadian Craig Forrest, but was blamed for two late goals which produced West Ham's defeat. Rio Ferdinand will be recalled after a calf strain.

Aston Villa's Ian Taylor reverts to being a spectator after his role in the 2-1 Uefa Cup defeat at Steaua Bucharest on Tuesday, serving a three-match ban. In the absence of Taylor, manager Brian Little is likely to move versatile Portuguese international Fernando Nelson back into midfield with Gary Charles slotting in at full-back. Little will also check on the fitness of Yugoslav international midfielder Sasa Curcic who has been out of the squad for the last two games because of a virus. He could win a place on the bench.

Tomorrow

Arsenal v Liverpool

Bergkamp 12
Last season: 1-2

Dennis Bergkamp and Emmanuel Petit both return from suspensions for Arsenal but Ray Parlour is out with a knee injury. Patrick Vieira is injured and Steve Bould is suspended. Arsène Wenger is now likely to revert to a 4-4-2 line-up with Martin Keown and Tony Adams in defence and Gilles Grimandi left out. Options to replace Parlour are Stephen Hughes or Luis Boa Morte, which, in either case, would mean switching winger Marc Overmars from left to right. Patrick Berger could lose his place in the tomorrow's Liverpool side. Manager Roy Evans is likely to include a more defensive midfielder man to play alongside Jamie Redknapp after the Berger filled the role in the 1-0 home defeat by Barnsley last week in place of Paul Ince. Ince and Robbie Fowler are still both suspended, so the inclusion of either Danny Murphy, Jamie Carragher or Micky Thomas is a possibility. Rob Jones is still unfit. Mark Wright, Phil Babb, Carragher, Thomas, Steve Harkness and Neil Ruddock all made successful comebacks from injury in the reserves on Thursday.

Man Utd v Blackburn

Cole 12
Last season: 2-2

Manchester United face the only team to have denied them the Premiership title since its inception with one key player absent, as Paul Scholes begins a three-match suspension. Ronny Johnsen is likely to slot into midfield, with Henning Berg replacing him in the heart of the defence. Philip Neville complained of double vision after the victory over 3-0 Champions' League win over Kosice on Thursday and is the only injury doubt, although Alex Ferguson said he would be fit to play.

Blackburn will again be without Colin Hendry and Martin Dahlin for tomorrow's top-of-the-table encounter. The international duo are still out with long-term injuries but there was good news for manager Roy Hodgson when both Kevin Gallacher and Tore Pedersen were both back in training and available for selection yesterday. Chris Sutton's new contract with Blackburn Rovers will keep him at the club for five more years and he will be hoping to make his first repayment on the investment by adding to his season's 11 goals.



SPORT

Saturday 29 November 1997



England show they are all in line during their preparation for today's match against South Africa at Twickenham, the third game of their four-Test autumn programme

Photograph: David Ashdown

Dallaglio's rallying cry for English ambition

Lawrence Dallaglio's colourful description of Gary Teichmann's Springbok team as a "wounded animal in frenzy" paints an accurate picture of the danger facing England at Twickenham this afternoon.

Chris Hewett says the South Africans are back up to speed after a cathartic spell in the rugby union slow lane.

Ian McGeechan, the Lions coach on the high veldt last summer, famously depicted his victorious team's style of play as "15-man rugby without the ball". If England attempt to pull a similar stunt at Twickenham this afternoon, they will drown in a sea of Springbok points; to beat

the world champions with a strategy based on hostile tackling and flawless goal-kicking, you need Scott Gibbs and Neil Jenkins rather than Nick Greenstock and Mike Catt.

Besides, these South Africans are a very different kettle of trouble to the strangely one-dimensional unit on which the Lions poured lashings of cold water in Cape Town and Durban. Nick Mallett, the hugely capable philosopher king from deepest Hertfordshire who succeeded Carel du Plessis as national coach in September, has hit the ground running by restoring a sense of purpose and responsibility to the rich and diverse talents at his disposal. As Jake White, the Springboks' technical advisor, said this week: "We know where we're heading now. We're heading towards the World Cup in 1999."

Roger Uttley, the England manager, also had something to say on the subject yesterday

and it was not calculated to bring comfort and serenity to the home dressing room. "Psychologically, the Lions' victory in the summer may well work against us, because I get the feeling it has made the Boks more focused than ever," he admitted. Focused enough to stick 50-odd points on the French in Paris last weekend. Focused enough to go after Lawrence Dallaglio, Richard Hill and the other English Lions today with the whiff of revenge in their nostrils.

If expectations of an English victory over the All Blacks at Old Trafford were so low as to border on the subterranean, they are scarcely any higher this time round. Martin Johnson's aggression will be badly missed; if the Leicester lock's partiality towards the occasional cheap shot has cost him a cap, it has also cost the English engine room its single most valuable piece of heavy machinery. Neither does Phil de Glanville's absence help

the cause. The Bath centre may not be the quickest thing on two legs, but he tackled himself to a standstill in Manchester last weekend and was relishing the prospect of giving Henry Honiball, Dick Muir and Andre Snyman some of the same.

Much depends on the contribution of Darren Garforth, the Leicester tight-head prop, and the reshaped back row of Dallaglio, Hill and Neil Back. If Garforth fails to neutralise the mighty Os du Randt by fair means or foul - Paul Wallace, the smiling Irish Lion, chose the latter course last summer, and somehow got away with it - the English scrum will go back so quickly that the threequarters will find themselves calling moves from the middle tier of the north stand. If he does the business, though, the loose trio may well ask the Boks an unanswerable question or two.

Dallaglio was in majestic form against New Zealand and

England require something similar from their captain on this occasion. Sensibly, he is not even contemplating a Lions-style exercise in barricade construction. "There were times during the summer when the Lions felt more comfortable without the ball than with it," he conceded. "If England can show the same ambition in attack as the Lions showed in defence, we're in for a cracking game of rugby."

"It's about results, yes, but it's about performance, too. We want to create scoring opportunities as well as deny those opportunities to the opposition."

For Clive Woodward and the rest of the England backroom team - a unit strengthened yesterday by the confirmation of Phil Larder, the former Great Britain rugby league coach, in a full-time advisory role - victory over the South Africans would be pure nectar. Thanks to the

unprecedented demands of this four-Test autumn programme, the new regime is still on honeymoon. No European side has ever been exposed to such a mountainous challenge, let alone a young and inexperienced English outfit still feeling its way in the big wide world. However, a second successive defeat after an unsatisfying draw would send just a little unease seeping into the inner sanctum.

For the long-term sake of England's national team, it is vital that Woodward holds his nerve; retains his vision and continues to back what is obviously a bold and adventurous line in rugby judgement. But for the sake of the coach's short-term sanity, he could do with the rub of the green. Will Dallaglio and company win him some breathing space this afternoon? For heaven's sake, don't bet your pension on it.

Wales heed a warrior, Page 21

ENGLAND v SOUTH AFRICA

at Twickenham	
M Perry	Bath
J Birtley	Newcastle
W Greenwood	Leicester
P de Glanville	Bath
D Rees	Sale
M Catt	Bath
M Dawson	Northampton
J Leonard	Harlequins
R Cockerill	Leicester
D Garforth	Leicester
G Archer	Newcastle
L Dallaglio	Wasps, capt
R Hill	Saracens
N Back	Leicester
15 P Montgomery	W Province
14 J Small	W Province
13 A Snyman	N Transvaal
12 D Muir	W Province
11 P Rossouw	W Province
10 H Honiball	Natal
9 W Swanepoel	Free State
8 O du Randt	Free State
7 J Dalton	Gauteng
6 A Garvey	Natal
5 M Andrews	Natal
4 K Otto	N Transvaal
3 A Aidsen	W Province
2 G Teichmann	Natal, capt
1 A Venter	Free State

Replacements: 16 P Grayson (Northampton); 17 A Healey (Leicester); 18 G Rowntree (Leicester); 19 M Ragan (Bath); 20 S Shaw (Wasps); 21 C Sheehy (Wasps).
Replacements: 16 J Swart (W Province); 17 J de Beer (Free State); 18 D van Zyl (Pretoria); 19 B Strydom (W Province); 20 W Meyer (Free State); 21 N Druwe (Free State).
Referee: C Hawke (New Zealand). Kick-off: 2.0 (Sky Sports 2).

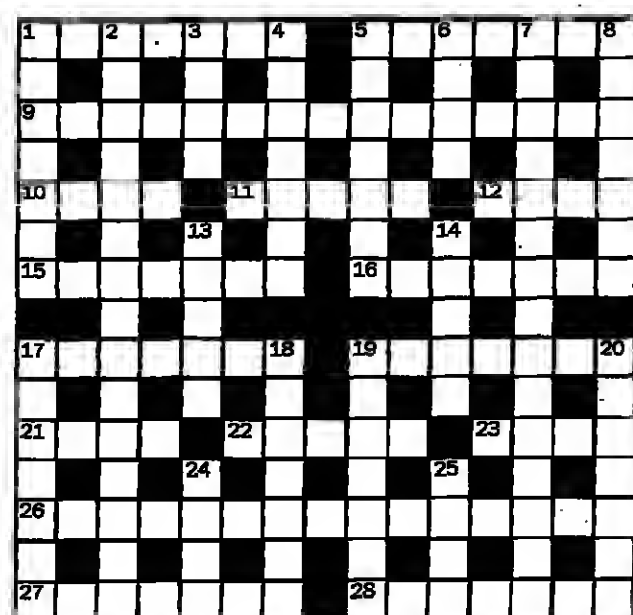
THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3469, Saturday 29 November

By Phi

ACROSS

DOWN



Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution

SLANGING MATCH
A Y N E N O S
PUZZLED RETOUCH
P Y O I E R O
ROBIN ALABASTER
E O Y Y T
HANDS AGREEMENT
E I G T I R M E
NOSTALGIC SPASM
S U N F
INJUNCTION TRACE
B A M S M A Y R
B I V A N S I N L I N E
E I T O N I O D
INTERROGATING

- Landing-site boss is going round perimeter (7)
- Spoil nearly everything in a marriage (7)
- Indifferent attitude towards computers etc? (4,2,5,2)
- Dislike hurry, wasting seconds (4)
- High-class stockist's first desire (5)
- Undertake exercises to get drug info (4)
- Those people accepting a charge for treatment (7)
- Many set for release in this? (7)
- Star, not quite elderly, resident in European city (7)
- Redesigned University with help of prospective worker (7)
- Time to copy a cassette (4)
- Upset most of Yankee country (5)
- Small creatures surrounding one in battle (4)
- No-one's watching this art coalesce, possibly (3,5,2,5)
- Job on island for delivery agent (7)
- Affectionate, glowing family (7)
- Chopper engineer starts to examine turbine (7)
- Very quick to take to an audience? (4,3,8)
- Very well-groomed, with superior cut (4)
- Opening for the men in party system (7)
- Tune has mother hiding unexpected smile (7)
- Nothing to be found in computer memory range (4)
- Drunk's threat to clothing? (3,5,3,4)
- A chance event left China powerless (7)
- Child, one locked in gaol (5)
- Cut tail of blue bird (5)
- Where to get more fuel? Coal-mine's best (3-4)
- Subdues member of new family (7)
- Year one's brought in to cut a heap of grass (7)
- Criminal leader getting round Yard on various levels (7)
- Make for the capital of Majorca (4)
- Observe first of cases in hospital (4)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive hand-drawn copies of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5BL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: O Struckis, Coleraine; M Ripplin, Market Drayton; D Bazeilone, Austwick; B Jones, London WC1; M Hicks, London NW2.

THIRTEEN PAGES OF SPORT START ON PAGE 16

Farewell Peter O'Sullivan: Greg Wood pays tribute as the voice of racing hangs up his microphone, page 18

Hello Bjorn Borg: John Roberts on the former Wimbledon champion, who competes in London next week, page 22

Welcome Back Chris Hewett talks to Neil Back on his return to the England rugby union team, page 21

IN MONDAY'S 20-PAGE SPORTS SECTION

Adam Holloake, captain of the England cricket team playing in Sharjah next week, talks to Derek Pringle

Chris Hewett and David Llewellyn report from Twickenham on England v South Africa; Tim Glover and Ken Jones report from Wembley on Wales v New Zealand

Matches of the day: Phil Shaw and Guy Hodgson watch Manchester United take on Blackburn; Glenn Moore sees Arsenal versus Liverpool

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PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR



YOUR MONEY

PERSONAL FINANCE, PROPERTY & MOTORING

Saturday 29 November 1997



On the scent of success: Schrodinger the cat is still beating the benchmark index after another stock-picking session, making selections by choosing pieces of dried cat food from a numbered grid

Photograph: Susannah Binney/Apex

A fund manager with nine lives

Stock market turmoil in the recent period has left many investment houses wondering how to deliver value to their clients. No such worries for Schrodinger, The Independent's feline fund manager. As Paul Slade reports, our cat has survived the last three months with all nine lives intact.

Tracking fund managers' performance every few months can leave them feeling somewhat under the spotlight. Perhaps that is why Schrodinger has not been as successful in the UK equity growth sector as he was when in smaller company stocks.

Even so, he has still shown a clean set of heels to the average benchmark index of the highest 350 companies quoted on the Stock Exchange. And his performance still leaves investment experts open-jawed in admiration.

Schrodinger makes his stock selections by choosing pieces of dried cat food from a numbered grid. In the year to August 12, his CAT small companies portfolio rose by 4.35 per cent, against just 3.25 per cent for the average fund

in the sector and 0.37 per cent for the funds' benchmark index – an impressive performance.

At that point, we had him make some new selections, taking CAT into the UK equity growth sector. His first three months as an equity growth manager – a period which includes October's extraordinary stockmarket volatility – saw CAT fall by 0.53 per cent against the sector's average drop of 0.04 per cent. However, this still ranks the revised portfolio equal 79th in a field of 161 UK equity growth trusts.

Readers with units in Royal London's UK Growth Trust may like to know their own fund manager turned in an identical performance. Schrodinger remains ahead of Legal & General and Standard Life, two leading insurers whose funds have suffered even more from October's financial storms.

Ian Millward, an independent financial adviser at London-based Chase de Vere, says Schrodinger's performance would cause him no undue concern. He says: "CAT would be a definite 'hold.' Its performance is OK over the short term and seems to be quite good over the longer term. It doesn't seem to be particularly volatile. I think you have to say it's holding its own."

Schrodinger's three-month

decline of 0.53 per cent still leaves CAT well ahead of the FTSE 350 – the closest match as a benchmark index – which fell by 3.74 per cent over the same period.

When we first created the portfolio in August 1996, the grid represented shares in the FTSE mid-250. When the time came to realign the portfolio, we dropped the 10 worst-performing small companies, and let him select 10 replacements from a FTSE 100 grid of the UK's biggest players. UK equity growth trusts can buy shares not only in the FTSE 250, but also the more impor-

tant FTSE 100 – an option Schrodinger did not previously have.

Two of the FTSE 100 shares he picked – Abbey National and Great Universal Stores – are among CAT's top performers over the last quarter, showing growth of 15.76 per cent and 9.37 per cent respectively. Our top performer was Granada, whose shares grew by 19.75 per cent in the last three months. Granada came into the portfolio when it took over Yorkshire Tyne Tees, one of Schrodinger's original small companies picks, in July.

This fits in with Schro-

ding's overall tactics so far, going for a portfolio which is overweight in financials, retailers and media, but underweight in sectors such as engineering.

Richard Carlyle, a pension fund manager at Henderson Touche Remnant, says: "It's a sensible split. If you were advertising yourself as an up-market, high fee-charging fund manager, and came up with this portfolio, you certainly couldn't be laughed at."

It is worth remembering that Schrodinger also underperformed as a small companies manager in his first quarter, but managed to turn the situation round as the year went on. His first-quarter performance in the UK equity growth sector will also have suffered from the dealing charges incurred when he sold his worst small companies stocks and bought the FTSE 100 ones.

The worst-performing unit trust in the UK equity growth sector over the past three months is Canada Life's CanLife General Trust, which lost 7.23 per cent of its value over the period. The top performer was Johnson Fry's Slater Growth Trust, which grew by 10.33 per cent. Johnson Fry may have been forced to issue a profits warning a week ago, but they've evidently got a smarter cat than we have.

UK equity growth unit trusts, over 3 months to November 10, 1997, offer to offer, not income re-invested.

Trust	3-month change	Ranking (161 funds)
Mercury Recovery	0.35%	75
Baring UK Growth	0.37%	76
Tilney UK Equity	0.47%	77
GT UK Growth	0.47%	78
Royal London UK Growth	0.53%	79
CAT Portfolio	0.53%	79
Halifax Growth	0.56%	80
Abbey Assets and Earnings	0.70%	81
Legal & General UK Recovery	0.74%	82
Scottish Mutual Select Opps	0.77%	83
Standard Life UK Equity Growth	0.79%	84

Source: Mirocapital/Independent

Thought for the day

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INSIDE

3/JOHN WINDSOR
Puzzling over jigsaws
5/JONATHAN DAVIS
Mind your Qs

9/PENNY JACKSON
The lure of the country
10/ROSALIND RUSSELL
On the big screen

11/ROBERT LIEBMAN
Move without trauma
12/GAVIN GREEN
Why I voted for the Alfa

2/PERSONAL FINANCE



NIC
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What Brown didn't mention

The Green Budget may have been good from the point of view of pensioners, who will now receive enhanced cold weather payments. Parents who will now be able to enrol their kids in one of the 30,000 planned out-of-school clubs will also raise a cheer.

But there was precious little in it to excite those of us who may have wanted to base our investment or borrowing decisions on what the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, had to say earlier this week.

The Iron Chancellor—or Iron Laddie, as some tabloids would have him called—said nothing about the new Individual Savings Account (ISA), which Labour intends to replace PEPs and Tessas in 1999.

Draft proposals will be published on Tuesday though, so by next week we should all have a better idea of whether to keep our money in existing PEPs and Tessas, or switch to the ISA.

Nor did Mr Brown give even a hint of what the Government intends to do about mortgage interest rate relief (Miras), the tax subsidy currently paid on the first £30,000 of most mortgages.

He may not have said anything this time (would you, after four mortgage rate rises in the past seven months?), but I'd still be willing to wager a small amount that the March Budget will see a drop in Miras relief from 10 per cent in April to 5 per cent the following year, or even its complete abolition.

Perhaps the greatest im-

ponderable is what Iron Laddie wants to do with inheritance tax. The current £215,000 limit, plus good tax advice, combine to ensure that all but about 15,000 estates each year scrape under the net.

In the run-up to last Tuesday, the air was thick with warnings of what might happen if the Laddie were to take an axe to some of the scams that help people avoid paying death duties.

It was always unlikely, however, that Mr Brown would have said anything on inheritance tax at this stage. Again, I'd be prepared to stick a small wager on this one coming up in a few months' time. Look out for potential exempt transfers being raised from seven to 10 years, or a limit of, say, £500,000 or £1m being placed on them.

More the point, look at some heavy-duty tax avoidance loopholes in a wide range of areas finally being plugged.

One small benefit to investors flowing from the decision to scrap advance corporation tax (ACT) is that investment trusts, whose shares have been trading well below net asset values, may now find it more easy to narrow that gap. In the past ACT ensured that share buy-backs, one way of reducing the discount, were inefficient.

So, all in all, what's the verdict? Five out of 10 for what he said and two out of 10 for not relieving the boredom factor.

MONEY MAKEOVER

The financial facts of married life

Name: Paul Grove
Age: 41
Occupation: School bursar
The problem: Mr Grove, who is 41, earns about £25,000 a year, while his fiancée earns £16,000. He has a £54,000 mortgage on a property that cost £65,000 in February and may now be worth £75,000. The mortgage is backed by two with-profits endowment policies, one maturing in 2009 and the other in 2016. He also owns 450 Woolwich shares.
He has £10,500 invested in an M&G investment trust which has a wind-up date of 2002, which he is concerned about because of its relative under-performance, plus £4,000 savings in a building society. His fiancée also has a similar amount in a society account.

The couple are both members of their respective occupational pension schemes. They have no outstanding loans and estimate that after setting up home together they will have a monthly "surplus" of £450, although they are also considering starting a family, in which case they might need to move to a larger house, potentially costing £100,000.

Mr Grove is considering investing for capital growth, possibly through direct investment in the stock market, looking 12 to 17 years ahead.

The adviser: James Bruce, financial planner and independent financial adviser, Corporate and

Personal Planning, Highwoods Square, Highwoods, Colchester, Essex, CO4 4BB (01206 841176).
The advice: First, you have a need for an adequate fund in case of emergencies. You already have £4,000 in a Nationwide Postal Account. This offers a superior rate of interest to equivalent branch-based accounts. I would recommend that you continue with this.

On the protection front, the two endowment policies contain life cover to pay off the mortgage loan in the event of your death. You also have death in service benefits of twice your salary in the event of death. Given that you have no dependents, at present you have no need for further life cover.

If you were unable to work for reasons of ill-health or accident, you would receive six months' full pay. I would recommend that you insure against this happening to you. Replacement of earnings cover paying £16,000 a year (about 64 per cent of current income) would cost £29 a month, assuming a 52-week deferment period.

You also have no protection in the event of a sudden serious illness—such as cancer, stroke or a heart attack—which you then survive. Critical illness cover pays a lump sum on diagnosis of a range of illnesses. The cost of such cover, which could be used to pay off the £54,000 mortgage loan in the event of illness, would be £30-£35 a month.



Paul Grove, who plans to marry next year, needs to consider some extra insurance cover

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

The pension scheme you belong to is a good one, with index-linked benefits based on your final salary and years of service. I recommend that you remain a member of this scheme.

One eventual you have mentioned is marriage to your fiancée next year. Typically, the costs of a wedding can be up to £10,000. This would make a significant dent in your savings.

After marriage the professional drafting of a will becomes vital, otherwise normal intestacy

laws will apply. With a will you can determine where you wish your inheritance to go.

Buying a new property at £100,000 will require extra funds of £35,000, assuming the sale of your existing one at £75,000. You are concerned that, jointly with your fiancée, mortgaging yourself to the hilt may not be sensible. I suggest putting down the largest deposit possible, using the financial resources you already have at your disposal.

The shortfall above can be

partly financed through the equity of £21,000 in your property, the existing PEP investment and your 450 Woolwich shares, leaving a gap of about £4,000. To meet this, I would suggest that any surplus income continues to be paid into your Nationwide account for the foreseeable future.

Although I agree that equity investment is the best option for long-term financial returns, I am not convinced that buying shares directly is the most se-

sible way to gain such exposure. Given your relatively low resources at present, pooled investments—such as unit and investment trusts—that spread risk are a better alternative. Given that you may require it to help finance the new property, I would suggest that you do not transfer the M&G investment trust into another fund at present, irrespective of its current disappointing performance. You might incur expensive initial charges to little purpose.

UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT/COMMERCIAL UNION'S PREMIER INVESTMENT BOND

The product: Commercial Union's Premier Investment Bond.

The deal: Invest at least £2,500 in the bond and Commercial Union will "guarantee" to pay a return of 9 per cent in the first year. Investors putting in more than £5,000 can also receive a small regular income from the investment, rising with age.

Plus points: The return beats most investment bonds available and charges, at first glance, appear to be pared to the bone. CU has dropped the usual initial charge (bid/offer spread). A policy charge of 0.08 per cent per month looks like good value.

Commercial Union has been very successful at marketing investment products such as this

bond because advisers believe the company can support its products from a sound financial base.

For wealthy investors putting more than £50,000 into the bond, CU will actually invest more than the fund is worth, or 102 per cent of the money put up.

Drawbacks and risks: The

"guaranteed" return is eye-catching, even when it only applies for a year. However, CU is not guaranteeing anything with regard to the investor's capital. If the securities in which CU's life fund invests—mostly UK equities—fall in value then CU reserves the right to apply a market value adjuster, a straight deduction from the fund. The

company says it has never applied this. However, pressure for it to do so is likely to increase if the present volatility in the stock market turns into a downward slide or a crash.

The charges are not quite as good as they first appear. Investors who are not 100-per-cent certain they will not need to cash in their investment should avoid

this because there are hefty surrender penalties of up to 9 per cent for early encashment. And the 0.08 per cent per month fee translates into a charge of more than 1 per cent a year; this is where CU's profit comes from. Verdict: Solid for those who already have solid finances. Marks out of five: Three.

—Andrew Varty

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3/PERSONAL FINANCE

THE INDEPENDENT
SATURDAY
29 NOVEMBER 1997

COLLECT TO INVEST

Pick up the pieces cheaply

Sniff, sniff. If the wooden jigsaw puzzle in the junk shop smells a bit musty or damp, it's good news. It has probably been preserved in an attic or cellar, with all its pieces intact. And if it is a big, 1,000-piece puzzle, it is more likely to be intact than smaller ones - big ones were so daunting that they were consigned to the attic sooner rather than later. John Windsor picks up the pieces

holes. Otherwise, how will you know whether your charity shop find is intact?

A puzzle worth £200 or more at auction - such as the rare 200-piece Great Western Railway's "G.W. Locomotive in the Making" made by Chad Valley between 1936 and 1939 - can drop in value by a half or two thirds if one or more pieces is missing. Without its box it suffers a similar drop in value. Locomotive in the Making, showing a party of schoolchildren apparently about to be crushed by a tank engine on an overhead hoist at GWR's Swindon workshop, is typical of the images that sell best.

Transport is the thing: express trains, ocean liners, aeroplanes - the sort of Cor-whoosh! juggernauts that set schoolboys' pulses racing before the space age.

It is not surprising that the biggest auction markets for jigsaw puzzles are transport linked. Puzzles realise their full "cross-over" value if sold at Ian Wright's Sheffield Railwayana Auctions, at the Romsey Auction Rooms, which sells model railways and vehicles, or in one of Bonhams' Chelsea toy sales.

A complete GWR "Locomotive in the Making" fetched an unusually hefty £480 at a sale by Sheffield Railwayana Auctions in Hendon in May. You would be lucky to pick one up for under £225, its going rate.

But complete, good-condition puzzles in the same GWR series regularly sell at auction for only £30-£50. GWR may be the must-have of jigsaw puzzle

collecting, but most are relatively common and most established puzzle collectors already own all but the rarest of the 40 or so in the series. There seems to be a glut of GWR/Chad Valley's The Romans at Cullerston and Brazenose College Oxford, at around £30 each.

The astute collector will explore new territory. Why, for example, are Pears puzzles, even the quotessentially Victorian "Bubbles" picture, still changing hands at only £15-£30?

The collector David Cooper cherishes his deliciously decadent Salome Dances Before Herod, a 600-piece puzzle published by Holtzapffel in about 1905. It sells for £50-£80. Its pieces are all of different shapes and it is a swine to make up.

Apart from that, very little is known about Holtzapffel, a German engineering company that settled in London and began making quality jigsaws solely to demonstrate its superb new jigsaw. Author Tom Tyler has a trade list of them, but the publisher of their prints is not known.

Will more collectors specialise in Holtzapffel, do some research - and push up prices? As a start, Mr Tyler's book brings to light some splendid Holtzapfels, including Salome and a Queen Cleopatra with edges that follow her outline. Many manufacturers' archives have been chucked into builders' skips. Tuck's were destroyed in the blitz.

Mr Cooper, a builder, has a sideline - he is the country's

most renowned maker of replica jigsaw pieces. Lend him the pieces surrounding the vacant spot and, for a fiver, he will cut a precise replica and his wife, Val, will paint it using acrylic colours.

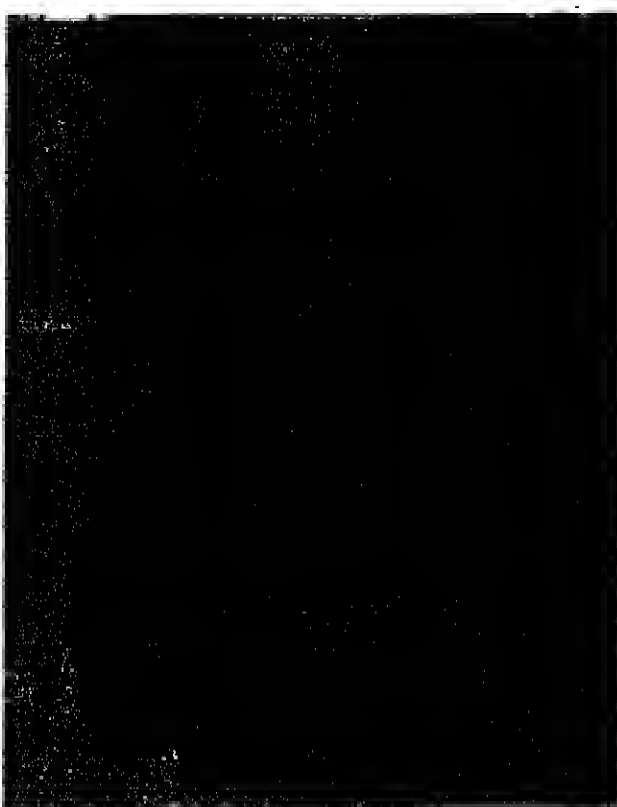
He uses balsa- backed plywood that is easily sanded down to the level of the surrounding pieces and shows up clearly and honestly on the back. "I restore the picture, not the puzzle," he says. The restoration of a lost piece or two will not restore more than two-thirds of the value of a puzzle at the most. But at least it will look perfect.

It is Mr Cooper who sniffs sawn plywood warned him against buying one that a dealer insisted was antique.

At Romsey Auction Rooms, jigsaw puzzle specialist Brian Lee has an antidote to the lost-piece problem - a number of knowledgeable vendors, many of them women, who pay as little as 20p for jigsaw puzzles in junk and charity shops and boot sales, assemble them, wrap them in cling film for display at auction - then watch them fetch £20 or £100 or £200.

Mr Lee would not offer a puzzle with an expensive title unless it was made up. Who would gamble even a quarter of its complete value in the hope of finding it intact? Many collectors, he reports, simply will not buy incomplete puzzles. You can buy loose puzzles at his sales, including run-of-the-mill cardboard ones, for around £30 for a lot of half a dozen or more.

Cautionary tale for the im-



Cleopatra, in a jigsaw by a German engineering company

patient: three consecutive staff at Bonhams, leading London auctioneers in jigsaw puzzles, spent a total of 45 hours assembling five boxed GWR puzzles - including the sought-after Locomotive in the Making - before offering them in last month's sale.

Locomotive in the Making, complete but with three pieces broken, sold for £138, three sold for £39, £46 and £63 and the fifth, The Fishguard Army, a fishing scene, damaged, failed to sell.

Tom Tyler is founder of The Benevolent Fraternity of Dissectologists (01473-723458). His 'British Jigsaw Puzzles of the Twentieth Century' is published by Richard Dennis, The Old Chapel, Shepton Beauchamp, Somerset

TA19 0LE (01460-24004), £22, p&p £1, credit card callers post-free. David Cooper (01227 742222), Romsey Auction Rooms (01794-513331), Sheffield Railwayana Auctions (Ian Wright 0114-274 5085), Bonhams Chelsea (0171-393 3906).

LOOSE CHANGE

The Shepherd's Friendly Society is offering three stars in the constellation Ursa Major as prizes in a competition. Winners will be able to name a star after themselves or anyone they choose. Entrants will be required to name the greatest wish they can make for the person after whom they would name the star. Call 0800 526249 for an entry form.

Shipton Building Society is launching two fixed-rate bonds. Both will pay 7.3 per cent gross, either over one or two years. On the two-year bond, interest is paid at the end of year one and at maturity. Call 0800 446776.

NetPEP the provider of a FTSE 100 tracker fund offered on the Internet, is offering to waive all initial charges on investments made before December 31. The PEP has annual charges of 0.35 per cent. Access to the NetPEP website is on: www.netpep.co.uk

Birmingham Midshires is launching a savings account, the Double Bonus Bond, which splits the investment between a variable rate of return, linked to Bank of England base rates, and the FTSE 100 share index. The bond pays a return of up to

7.5 per cent on the variable half of the investment and is guaranteed to match base rates until January 1999. The stock market element guarantees a minimum of 20 per cent, up to a maximum of 100 per cent. Call 01902 302323. Leeds & Holbeck Building Society is offering visitors to its new Internet site the chance to win cross-Channel ferry crossings from Dover or Portsmouth in a free monthly prize draw. Access is on: www.leeds-holbeck.co.uk

Colonial, the financial services provider, has re-priced its standard term assurance rates. A non-smoking male aged 30 next birthday now pays £7.85 a month for £50,000 of cover over 25 years, compared to £8.72 from Allied Dunbar or £11.50 from Prudential. Call 0800 828501.

Peart, the insurance company, is cutting from 6 to 4 per cent the initial charges on investments into its range of unit trusts and PEPs, including its Equity Income and Equity Growth trusts. Annual management charges are 1.5 per cent. Call Leo Thomas or Ruth Weighill on 0171 3699333.



INTERNET INVESTOR

ROBIN AMLOT

Looking for a loan on-line

Base interest rates went up earlier this month - you probably noticed. However, you may not have noticed the trickle of increases in rates by various mortgage lenders. Many building societies say they will hold their standard variable mortgage rates unchanged at least until the end of this year. Most of the bank mortgage lenders have already put their mortgage rates up.

If you want to know exactly why the Bank of England decided to raise interest rates, the minutes of the Monetary Policy Committee meeting held on November 5-6 will be published on December 10 and you will be able to read them for yourself on the Bank's website.

But what of mortgage rates? Who is offering the best deal and how long for? A new website, Moneynet, offers an independent interactive service, Mortgage Finder, which lists rates, discounts, conditions and special offers from more than 80 mortgage lenders. Details of mortgage rates and offers are updated daily.

Using Mortgage Finder, you can review fixed rate, discounted, capped or variable rate mortgages, those offering a cashback or any mix of the above. In addition to interest rates, a full breakdown is available for each product, highlighting relevant information such as early redemption penalties, any insurance insisted upon by the lender and any arrangement fees charged.

Moneynet is a work-in-progress. The site includes a section on FAQs (frequently asked questions) and will have a mortgage calculator, which is currently being built. It is best viewed using Microsoft's Internet Explorer rather than Netscape Navigator, the other main web browser. In future, the site aims to include information about conveyancers and insurers.

While you can search for a mortgage on the world wide web, you still cannot yet arrange one on-line. However, the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML), the trade body which represents lenders accounting for about 98 per cent of all the mortgages in the UK, is now weighing up the feasibility of mortgage trading being carried out electronically by intermediaries - financial advisers - still one step removed from consumers.

Meanwhile, the CML has launched its own website which contains information on its members and provides links to lenders' websites. It offers consumer information in the shape of guides to buying a home in England and Wales and buying a home in Scotland. The site also contains a range of consumer fact sheets, press releases and statistical data on house prices and mortgage arrears.

Though you cannot arrange a mortgage on-line, there is now a mortgage account that you can manage on the web. It is Legal & General's Flexible Reserve Mortgage, which, in early 1995, was the first flexible mortgage to be offered in the UK. L&G has

launched InterPlan, an interactive approach to managing money on the Internet and as a first step is offering an on-line mortgage management service.

The Flexible Reserve Mortgage allows you to make extra payments, at any time, to reduce the outstanding mortgage and create an available reserve. It offers a competitive variable rate of interest, which L&G promises will never be more than 1.5 per cent above bank base rates. The rate is currently 7.7 per cent, equivalent to an APR of 8.0 per cent.

Using InterPlan you can see at a glance your outstanding mortgage. Statements are updated daily and list your last five lump sum transactions, your current mortgage balance and the amount available to you in your available reserve. You can also submit transaction requests, arranging to make lump sum payments, amend or instruct an additional monthly payment, take a payment holiday or borrow back money from your available reserve.

There is also a personal planner calculator which allows you to see the effect of making mortgage overpayments, borrowing from your Available Reserve or taking payment holidays.

Bank of England: www.bankofengland.co.uk
Moneynet: www.moneynet.co.uk
Council of Mortgage Lenders: www.cml.org.uk
Legal & General InterPlan: www.legal-and-general.co.uk/iplan

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4/PERSONAL FINANCE

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BRIAN TORA

In some ways, the collapse of Japan's fourth largest bank should be welcomed

Both sides of the inflation versus deflation argument received a flip this week. Those who believe rising prices are the real danger will have had their fears confirmed by the latest Bank of England Inflation Report. The Labour market is tightening, with shortages appearing not just amongst skilled workers. Those unfortunate employees of Yamaichi should have little difficulty in finding new employment in the Square Mile.

The collapse of Yamaichi - and more importantly the problems facing South Korea - must add weight to those who argue that deflation remains the dominant threat. The delay to Hyundai's £3bn semiconductor project in Scotland is just one example of how the problems afflicting the Tigers may have knock-on effects. Analysts have downgraded their growth forecasts sharply. The restrictions accompanying the IMF rescue package in South Korea will not help either.

But there is comfort to be gained from news emanating from the Orient. The relative calm with which markets greeted the news of the collapse of Japan's fourth largest stockbroker is encouraging. At the very least it shows confidence in the authorities' ability to manage the situation. Indeed, in some ways the collapse should be welcomed. Not so many years ago such a major financial problem might have been swept under the carpet.

Yamaichi is the third Japanese financial institution to fold in as many weeks.

Interestingly all were based on the same street in Tokyo, now not surprisingly nicknamed 'Tozan-Dori', or Bankruptcy Row. No doubt other brokers sharing this address are even now looking for alternative premises.

Back home there are a few brokers who are none too pleased with the Stock Exchange. Problems remain with the electronic order book, which is still failing to achieve the penetration into share trading originally envisaged. Prices during the first hour of trading remain unreliable, but this is when the bulk of execution-only business is transacted.

The prices struck for these trades can be as much as 15 per cent adrift from those that apply once the market has settled down. The Exchange toyed with the idea of allowing a delay before these orders were carried out, but has abandoned these plans, preferring to recommend the adoption of price limits instead.

Execution-only brokers considered this unsatisfactory. Educating clients to use limits sensibly will add to their costs and risks remain that orders will not be carried out, or more than one attempt will be made to transact what should otherwise be simple business.

With a number of traders now curtailing their link with the electronic order book to avoid highly volatile periods at the beginning and end of the day, both prices and index levels cannot be relied upon.

Brian Tora is chairman of Greg Middleton's investment strategy committee

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0181 667 1121	4.5% 5 years	85%	£1,000

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0181 667 1121	12.9%	85%	£1,000

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0181 667 1121	Overdraft	12.9%	£1,000

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0181 667 1121	Instant Access	4.5%	£1,000

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Telephone	Account	Rate	Interest
0181 649 9099	Instant Access	4.5%	£1,000
0181 667 1121	Instant Access	4.5%	£1,000

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0181 667 1121	Notice Account	4.5%	£1,000

CHEQUE ACCOUNTS

Telephone	Account	Rate	Interest
0181 649 9099	Cheque Account	4.5%	£1,000
0181 667 1121	Cheque Account	4.5%	£1,000

FIXED RATE BONDS

Telephone	Account	Rate	Interest
0181 649 9099	Fixed Rate Bond	4.5%	£1,000
0181 667 1121	Fixed Rate Bond	4.5%	£1,000

FIRST TESSAS

Telephone	Account	Rate	Interest
0181 649 9099	First Tessa	4.5%	£1,000
0181 667 1121	First Tessa	4.5%	£1,000

FOLLOW-ON TESSAS

Telephone	Account	Rate	Interest
0181 649 9099	Follow-on Tessa	4.5%	£1,000
0181 667 1121	Follow-on Tessa	4.5%	£1,000

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0181 649 9099	Offshore Account	4.5%	£1,000
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How to tell the markets are running too hot

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5/PERSONAL FINANCE

THE INDEPENDENT
SATURDAY
29 NOVEMBER 1997

How to tell the markets are running too hot



THE
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A few years ago, the big craze at Christmas was to make a present of a Rubik's Cube. This year, a wise investor might well be a crash course in what market aficionados know as "Tobin's q". I am grateful to Andrew Smithers, chairman of the investment consultancy firm of Smithers & Co, for a fascinating insight into this important state of the world's stock markets.

If you don't know what Tobin's q ratio is, the chances are that you are not alone. But he warned - it is important; and it is not for the faint-hearted. For the message that it is transmitting today is uncompromisingly one of warning about the risks in the markets at their current levels.

Tobin's q ratio is the invention of a distinguished American economist by the name of James Tobin, who won the Nobel Prize in 1981 for his pioneering work in a number of economic subjects, of which the stock market was just one. He was interested in the economic behaviour of the stock market and its relationship with the real economy.

One of his great insights was to see that you could use aggregate national income statistics to take the temperature, as it were, of the stock market at any point in time. By comparing the replacement cost value of the corporate sector's assets with the value of the stock market at the same moment, you can derive an overall sense of how far the market is deviating from its fundamental value.

This relationship is the famous q ratio. In effect, it is the reading on the stock market's thermometer. It tells us whether the market is running hot or cold at any time - and by how far. Not for nothing does the Federal Reserve in the United States use a very similar measure to try and judge whether the stock market is overheating or not.

It is, let us be clear, a theoretical construct developed by a man who described himself, openly and with pride, as "an ivory tower economist". It tells us nothing about what the market is going to do tomorrow. But what it does tell us is where the current level of the market is in relationship to the long run historical average to which it must over time revert.

In the words of Andrew Smithers, who has done more than anyone to bring the concept to the attention of the City's fund management community, it is not strictly speaking a valuation tool at all, but a measure of the risk in the market at any time. The higher the ratio stands, the greater the risk that the markets will soon fall back to their historical average levels and beyond.

What worries the aficionados of Tobin's q is that the ratio is now standing at levels in both the United States and the UK which are as high as they have ever been in the past. The chart shows how the ratio has moved over the years since the start of the great bull market of the 1920s. (The pre-war data is the result of some outstanding historical detective work by a British economist, Stephen Wright of Cambridge University). The message is about as clear as it could be: until this month's squalls in the markets, prompted by the unfolding financial crisis in the Asian region, both the UK and US markets were standing at dangerously high levels.

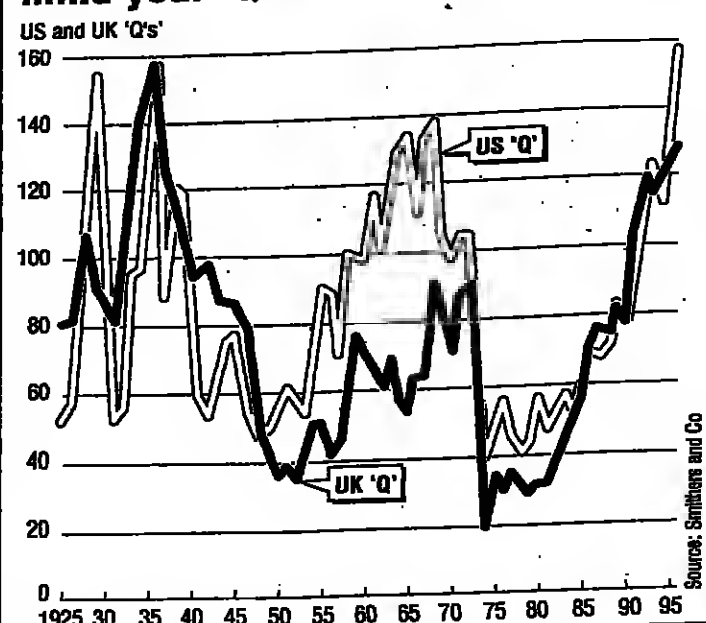
Andrew Smithers himself has no doubt what message investors should read into the chart's findings. Rather like Cassandra, he has been trying to sound the alarm for more than 18 months. In September 1996, he calculated that the UK market was "dangerously overpriced" at around 1.7 to 2.0 times its long-run historical average. The US market was even more overvalued on the same measure.

Yet since then the markets have continued to be strong, demonstrating that the ratio is indeed a measure of risk, not of the market's short term direction. The q ratio now is higher still. Does the market's strength invalidate the theory that lies behind Tobin's q? No. It merely emphasises that shares are volatile and more risky than other types of asset, which is precisely why they provide higher returns over long periods of time.

But what you can say - and Mr Smithers does, to who all who will listen - is that the further you look ahead, the higher the probability that returns from equities will now be poor or negative. He has a telling table which chronicles how share prices have performed in the five years after the q ratio has peaked in the past. The simple answer is: they go down. The minimum the q ratio has fallen in the past after a peak has been 46 per cent. The average fall from peak to trough has been 63 per cent.

The implication is that the US and UK stock markets are both heading for a substantial fall at some point in the next five years. This will be a familiar message to readers of this column, but this time at least you don't have to take my word for it. "Professor Tobin received a Nobel prize for his

Mind your 'Q's'



work and the US market may thus be said to be taking a \$3 trillion bet that he should return his laurels." Mr Smithers commented last year, adding, "I expect him to be justified in keeping them." The markets are

still making that bet, on both sides of the Atlantic, and making lots of money as a result of defying Mr Smithers' warnings, as he himself cheerfully admits. But then Cassandra never expected to be heard either.

UNDERSTANDING THE STOCK MARKET

Growth stocks are the shares of companies able to increase their earnings per share at a greater rate than average. Shares in such companies can be one of the most rewarding of stock market investments, with shareholders securing significant capital gains in the long term as earnings per share and share price are umbilically linked.

Earnings per share is a straightforward concept. It is simply the after-tax profits divided by the number of shares issued. If a company manages to sustain an annual 15 per cent growth, it would double earnings over a five-year period.

Naturally, investors are interested in the future as opposed to the past. Optimistic views in the chairman's statement found in the most recent annual accounts point to history repeating itself. Another good sign is the company's policy towards dividends. A record of an increasing rate of dividend is good, but a fall in the rate of increase or simply maintaining the previous level can be a warning signal.

While a company's above-average progress is an indication of good management, it also suggests it has a strong competitive advantage which makes it difficult for others to improve on or copy.

Companies with brand names that have long been household names are in a strong

position to grow. Similarly companies which have patents on products in great demand can earn shareholders a fortune.

Companies' published accounts offer invaluable information. Increasing profits need to be reflected in growing cash balances, not in higher stock levels or fixed assets.

Check that the net operating cash flow is at least the same as, but preferably more than, the net operating profits. Truly great growth stocks also have little or no balance sheet debt. Seek companies whose debt is less than 50 per cent of net assets.

The engine that drives a company's share price is earnings. One of the leading investment yardsticks is the price/earnings (p/e) ratio. It is the company's share price divided by its after-tax earnings per share. In other words is the number of years' earnings needed to equal the current share price.

Investors will pay more for a share if they think a company's earnings are going to rise quickly. Essentially the ratio reveals how highly investors value a company's prospective earnings.

Generally, a high p/e denotes a growth company, while a low p/e ratio is a sign of inertia and risk. The p/e is shown daily on *The Independent's* Shares page.

-John Andrew

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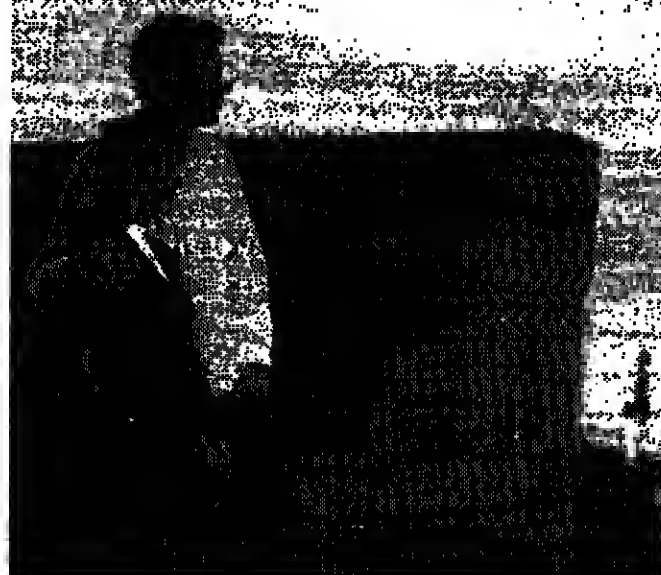
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6/MUTUALS SURVEY

Owned by the customers. It's still a winning strategy



The customer is king: Nationwide, along with the other building societies that have stayed mutual, has to retain the loyalty of its savers and borrowers and compete head-on with all comers in the financial world

Tony Buckingham

The building societies, the mutual insurers, the Co-op ... mutual societies have a long and distinguished history. But what sort of future do they have now that some of the biggest have converted to plc status? Tony Lyons introduces a two-page survey showing why the surviving mutuals believe they still have a lot to offer

Mutual societies have been an established part of the financial scene for over two centuries. Not listed on any stock exchange, and owned entirely by members, they had a cosy existence for most of the time.

There are different types of mutual societies. These range from the Co-operative Society to building societies owned by their saving and borrowing members, plus life offices owned by with-profits policyholders.

Many mutuals were formed originally by local worthies to provide local benefits and financial assistance to members, whether to provide housing in the case of building societies or life cover by the in-

surers. They had no outside shareholders to demand a return on capital invested.

The past couple of years have seen the existence of mutuals under challenge. As the banks in particular have sought to increase their product range, offering under one roof all the financial services that their customers want, new entrants have emerged in their more traditional markets in the shape of direct providers and supermarkets.

Who would have thought, barely a few years ago, that one might be able to buy investments or pensions at Marks & Spencer, that Richard Branson's Virgin operation would become a significant force

in savings and mortgages, or that the some of best instant savings deals would come from Tesco and Sainsbury's.

In order to compete in what they see as a much bigger marketplace, some of the largest mutuals have changed to plc status, enriching their members in the process. Abbey National was the first in the queue nearly a decade ago. The recession slowed the process, however. In the last couple of years Abbey has been joined by several large rivals including Halifax, Alliance & Leicester and Woolwich. They believed that by having a stock market listing they could diversify while at the same time shareholder pressure would in-

crease returns by enabling them to become more efficient.

All this has led to wild speculation as money flooded into potential demutualisers, especially building societies, in the hope of making windfall gains. This dramatically slowed down after many of the beleaguered societies raised their minimum deposit rates for becoming a member from £1 to £1,000 or more. The Government is also coming to their aid by changing the rules so that at least half the members have to vote on any change in mutual status.

As it is, the recent stock market flotations, including that of the insurer Norwich Union, together with a number of take-

overs, including Bristol & West, National & Provincial, and Scottish Amicable, have put more than £30bn into the pockets of their former members, equal to some £1,700 for every adult in the country.

The increased competition from proprietary companies with their outside shareholders has made the committed mutuals, and their near cousins the provident societies, sit up and take stock. Gone is the former complacency. Now they are striving not only to retain the loyalty of their existing members but also to compete head-on with all comers, as this survey seeks to show. The evidence shows that they are winning the debate.

The dust has settled but the war goes on

Mutual societies have seen living in abnormal market conditions over the past couple of years. Building societies in particular have seen a flow of customers fleeing from conversions or takeovers. But, as Vernon Bates writes, the mutuals are fighting back.

The windfall fever has now cooled. The recent decision by Helen Liddell, Treasury Secretary, that at least half the members of a society must vote on any question of demutualisation has put a damper on speculation.

While the spate of conversions has diminished, the argument for and against demutualisation continues to rage, with each side highlighting its respective benefits. John Caine, director of corporate affairs at Alliance & Leicester, is particularly critical of his mutual competitors, claiming that they have double standards and inherent inefficiencies.

He says: "The first mutual was formed in a Birmingham b in 1781 by teachers and clerics, people with a common bond. How then can a society have an objective to aid members be extended to include a million or more people from all walks of life? Just look at the range and product available to the customer now compared 15 years ago."

He is particularly critical of Abbey National, the biggest remaining building society, after a summer's vote when a supermajority of members tried to join the board so as to force it to demutualise. John Caine claims

members were not given a real choice in their future. "Something like 350,000 people voted for a freelance butler to be on the board at the Nationwide. If the vote had been the option to convert or not, I guarantee many more would have voted to convert."

As for whether the societies offer the best deals, Mr Caine cites a recent survey in *Your Mortgage* magazine of 46 leading mortgage lenders, where Nationwide ranked 45th most expensive for the cost of a £30,000 mortgage between August 1992 and July, 1997. He states that this is proof that mutuals are not always offering the best deals. Indeed, Alliance & Leicester, which converted to a publicly owned company this year, was the cheapest lender over that period.

Such surveys are offered to counter the battle cry that a mutual always offers the best deal. Yet, as with many such surveys, they do not always tell the whole truth. The early to mid-1990s was a period in which many societies felt no need to compete seriously in defence of mutuality.

Hence, deals on offer remained broadly the same across both banks and building societies. Over the past two years that has changed and it is likely - assuming present conditions still apply in two or three years' time - that mutuals will then be trouncing their banking rivals.

Ken Culley, chief executive of Portman Building Society and chairman of the Metropolitan Association of Building Societies, argues: "As a mutual, we do not have to pay dividends or maximise profits for the sake of institutional shareholders. This is unlike a plc."

Portman and other building societies have launched loyalty programmes for their members.

Pay-backs are given in the form of bonuses to long-standing borrowers and savers, depending on profits made.

Looking at life assurance, the leading mutuals such as Scottish Widows, Standard Life, Friends Provident and Equitable Life, have had a long record of being amongst the top performers for long-term-with profits endowment and pension policies. Not having to pay dividends to outside shareholders means that the members get the benefits.

The mutual financial service providers are using their capital structure and competitive strengths to try and convince customers that they provide the best deals in the marketplace, in terms of products, pricing and service standards.

These new strategies have had an especially dramatic impact in the highly competitive mortgage market. In 1996, building societies committed to their mutual status took a greater share of net mortgage lending than banks, converting mutuals and specialist providers combined.

A similar picture has emerged this year, with mutuals capturing a far bigger slice of business than they would seem to be entitled to. Of course, some of this is down to the expectations of many new members, particularly savers, that in the event of a future society flotation, they stand to gain from another free share bonanza.

None of this implies that the mutuals can afford to rest on their laurels. Some of the largest competitors in mortgage, banking and insurance are looking to expand by means of mergers and acquisitions. Many new entrants, such as the supermarket giants, are coming on the scene. There is a continuing trend by the large in-

stitutions to offer an ever-widening range of products under one roof.

These developments are increasing competitive pressure and it is far from clear what the final shape of the financial services industry will be in a few years time. As a consequence everyone is trying to beef up their quality of service they offer customers, engaging specialist marketing consultancies to assist them.

Peter Rufus, director at The Red Partnership, just such an agency, says: "There is continual pressure to earn more revenue from existing customers. But revenue will only come from understanding the changing needs of customers."

"This means building relationships based on the way that customer wants to be served. The days when a prospective customer approached a bank or building society with cap in hand are a distant memory. The customer is now king."

Chris Holland, Bradford & Bingley's corporate affairs manager, admits that the mutuals occasionally get things wrong. But he adds: "Such instances are often outweighed by improving standards and a positive effort to learn from errors."

The importance of maximising customer satisfaction is recognised, especially when this can lead to new purchases. "A satisfied customer who buys additional services leads to better profits," says Mr Holland.

However, the future of the mutuals is in the hands of their savers and borrowers, who are demanding ever better service and products at prices that represent solid value. After all, without any obvious benefits, membership of a mutual society may feel no different to being a customer in a publicly-listed bank.

Worth checking out in the age of supermarket savings

It used to be easy. If you wanted a mortgage or savings account you went to a building society, if you needed a bank account you went to a bank and if you wanted groceries you visited a supermarket. Nowadays, they all offer mortgages and savings accounts. The building societies argue they still provide the best deals, but is this true? Abigail Morrose investigates.

Following the recent spate of building society conversions, there are now just 71 left in business in the UK, with over 10 million members between them. The societies argue that they offer better value over the long-term than other savings and mortgage providers because they only have their members' interests at heart. In contrast, the mutuals claim, public companies, such as the banks and former building societies, put shareholders' interests before those of their customers.

Alan Oliver, spokesman for the largest building society, Nationwide, says: "We don't have to pay dividends or put shareholders' interests first. We can focus on our customers in everything we do, passing on the benefits of better mortgage and savings rates to them." Fine words,

but does the rhetoric stand up to the facts?

A recent survey by the Consumers' Association looked at the savings and mortgage rates offered throughout 1996 by the five largest remaining building societies - Nationwide, Bradford & Bingley, Britannia, Birmingham Midshires and Yorkshire. These were compared with five which had announced their decision to convert into banks - Halifax, Woolwich, Alliance & Leicester, Northern Rock and Bristol & West.

Those which became banks charged mortgage borrowers an average variable interest rate of 6.75 per cent during 1996 - 0.3 percentage points more than the mutual building societies. A typical £50,000 loan would cost about £8-£9 a month more with a bank than a building society.

Savers with the converting societies also lost out, receiving an average of 4.41 per cent gross interest on their savings, compared to 4.8 per cent that the mutuals were paying. On a £5,000 deposit, the mutuals win out by £19.20 a year on average.

The converting societies may have been able to get away with poorer rates as they forced members to remain with them in order to receive their cash windfalls.

But figures from the Building Societies Association show that on average banks regularly charge more for mortgage loans than building

societies. In September, for example, the average standard variable rate mortgage from a bank was 8.45 per cent, while the average building society charged a lower 8.13 per cent.

Further evidence of this trend comes from Money-Facts, a provider of interest rate data. It looked at how much interest the top 30 mortgage lenders charged on a £50,000 standard variable rate mortgage in the 12 months to the end of June 1997.

The seven cheapest deals were all offered by building societies. Yorkshire Building Society, for example, charged £299.91 less that year than Bank of Ireland Mortgages charged for the same mortgage.

But the building societies also now compete with direct lenders such as Direct Line and Virgin Direct and new telephone banks such as Scottish Widows Bank and Sainsbury's Bank, which currently offer some of the lowest standard mortgages on the market.

To try and stop these new mortgage providers cutting in on their share of the market, a number of building societies have introduced special deals. For example, Bradford & Bingley, in common with some smaller, regional societies, offers reduced standard variable mortgage rates to long-term borrowers.

Britannia Building Society has a members' loyalty bonus scheme, which pays out an annual bonus to members depending on its annual profits.

Nationwide has given back £400m in total to members in the form of better mortgage and savings rates. Its standard variable mortgage rate is presently 8.1 per cent and it has promised not to raise this before Christmas.

The savings market is just as competitive as that for mortgages. The new banks set up by supermarkets and insurance companies such as Prudential Banking, Legal & General Bank, Scottish Widows Bank, Sun Banking Corporation and Sainsbury's Bank offer some impressive rates, especially for instant access and postal accounts.

Nationwide argues, however, that often these new banks will only offer one or two types of savings account, whereas building societies typically offer a much wider range.

A quick look at the best buy tables shows building societies frequently offer the best deals on long-term savings accounts such as fixed-rate accounts, regular savings accounts, Tassas and bonds.

In the future, it remains to be seen how many building societies will be able to maintain their mutual status. Members may yet be seduced by promises of large windfalls and seek to convert their societies into banks.

In the meantime, they are putting up a fight to retain their members, forcing other financial institutions to offer attractive rates to both savers and borrowers. Long may this last.

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Rural life beckons? Opt for renting

Who could blame anyone for thinking that the path to a house in the country is littered with failed offers, poor choice and a long wait? More than a few who sold up in London earlier in the year will find their goal of being settled by Christmas diminishing fast. But as Penny Jackson discovers, there are also those for whom a move out of town has been a brilliant decision.

Tales of woe from those who have been house-hunting for years can sound like a catalogue of frustration. It would all be much easier if buyers did not have their hearts set on the same kinds of property. But there are only so many Georgian rectories in nice villages, and the chances are their owners are staying put – if only because they themselves find the alternatives in depressingly short supply. Nevertheless, there are those who manage to move out of town without being reduced to panic.

One couple who abandoned south London for Gloucestershire in the summer had seen enough friends tearing down the motorway to view yet another unsuitable house, to know what course to take.

They are letting their Balham house while renting in the country. "For at least a year and a half we are going to relax and enjoy living here," says Hugo Jackson, an investment broker. "We couldn't face the prospect of house-hunting from London. And this way we can find out which villages we like best. We are able to rent this house for three years, and if we still haven't found the house we want, we will rent again."

Even though Hugo and his wife Serena have no regrets, they do have the comfort of knowing that if it doesn't work out – and commuting does take its toll – they still have their London home. One rent pays for the other and they have no worries about having realised their capital in a rising market.

Not that they are unaware of the difficulties of finding their ideal house. They are not alone in wanting somewhere within 20 minutes of school



At home: Serena Jackson is enjoying the space of their new home, which they are renting while they search for the ideal house John Lawrence

and station or of wanting a Cotswold stone farmhouse.

"We already know of 12 or 14 sets of parents in the school looking for exactly the same thing," says Hugo. However, Serena, who is still enjoying the novelty of so much space for their three sons, has confidence in the power of networking in the playground.

"So many houses never even come on to the market", she says. "Once we took the plunge it wasn't as difficult to move as we feared. It feels like home because we have our furniture and we are not under pressure to buy. I can see how demoralising that would be."

During the past couple of years, reluctant renters have not only brought landlords some unexpectedly good returns, they have even learned

to enjoy being tenants. "Upwards of £2,000 a month buys quality of life without repair liabilities," says Andrew Brown, of Clegg Kennedy Brown, a firm of estate agents. "We have one family who, rather than sell their family home, are letting it out and renting a larger one while their children are young."

Other tenants hope, quite often against the odds, that the house they are renting will eventually come up for sale. "Requests for first refusal are quite common", he says.

As prices in London reached a peak in the spring, so the temptation to sell and move out proved irresistible to many who already had vague plans in mind. "They arrived in Hampshire, guns blazing," recalls Tim Garne,

of Hampsons International. "Even those with cash found it harder than they imagined. It seemed worth it to them to pay well over the odds to secure a house."

Most people, even though in the £350,000 to £450,000 bracket, have to compromise. "Some might go for the right house but in a different area, while others will move into a modern box and wait for more houses to come on to the market. Plenty have been renting for two years longer than they had planned, but often they are stuck because of schools," says Mr Garne.

"There is a danger that their capital will be whittled away if they wait too long." Christine Martin and her husband decided within a couple of days to sell and go.

"When we found that our Ealing house had risen in value in a matter of months we thought we would be foolish to wait. We were out within eight weeks and renting. The fact that we did it on the spur of the moment was exciting rather than nerve-wracking."

The Martins narrowed their choice to Northamptonshire – right school, good rail links and reasonable value for money. Even so, they did not get the 200-year-old house of their dreams. "We would still be waiting now, like many couples we know. As it is, we have a good size house with great potential. So many of the houses we saw were over-developed."

Clearly the longer buyers wait, the harder it is to compromise. In Cirencester, Ru-

pert Barrington of John D. Wood has some clients who have been waiting for five years for property with land. Houses for sale with 10 or 15 acres are few and far between.

When they do come up, it is not uncommon to find someone has paid handsomely to take it out of the market. A 10 per cent premium may well not be enough. Frustrated purchasers have taken the place of disgruntled vendors these days. Those who have taken to dropping on their estate agent at least weekly expect some rewards. But clients not favoured by the phone call can feel aggrieved. "We now refuse to tip anyone off and mail details to everyone at the same time. It seems fairer all round," says Mr Barrington.



PENNY JACKSON

Swap shop – one agent's remedy for the log-jam

"If I'd earned a pound for every time someone told me they would sell if only they could find somewhere to buy, I wouldn't need to sell houses at all", one estate agent complained the other day. He is not alone.

In Beaconsfield, Timothy Gerrard, of estate agents Rafferty Buckland, is so fed up with the log-jam he has taken matters into his own hands. He is in the process of publishing a mini-magazine with properties people are thinking of selling. "I can already see two owners doing a perfect swap. They don't know it yet but they are just around the corner from each other. Both can afford the other house and they have the same taste."

The enterprising Mr Gerrard decided to get the ball rolling when he found 115 people on the computer in the area who wanted to buy but were anxious about putting their own houses up for sale even though valuations had been done. "Many want to stay in the same road, but are after a house with perhaps a larger garden or one more bedroom, while others want to trade down. Local people often can't compete with the unencumbered buyers from London so this might give them a head-start."

Good news for commuters from Banbury. Chiltern Railways is to cut the journey time between that station and Marylebone by 25 mins. The new, fast, peak-time only service, which will start in May, means that Birmingham to London will take just under two hours instead of 2hr 25 mins, while the journey from Banbury is reduced to an hour from the present 1 hr 25 mins.

According to George Philip in the Banbury office of Lane Fox, the estate agents, this should make a significant difference to the value of property in north Oxfordshire. "Something in the region of 7 to 10 per cent", he says. "This area has been held back by its relatively slow service. It will now be on a par with places like Winchester and Newbury". Chiltern Railways also has plans for a new out-of-town station near Warwick.

Nicholas Brown of Knight Frank in Oxford can also envisage it becoming more viable as a commuter area, as much to those working in Birmingham as in London. "At present, the most popular areas for London commuters are south-west of Oxford, which has good rail links, and east of Oxford, which is the right side for the motorway. They also want to be able to get into the city easily for the schools, so there is enormous demand in the villages within 10 or 15 miles."

Wanted: one careful tenant who loves dogs. The owners of a north London house who are moving overseas next month are so upset at the thought of their pet being separated from its home as well as the family, they are hoping to leave it in situ. The future of Freeway – a Shih Tzu – is hanging in the balance. "It would be lovely if Freeway could stay there," says Susan Gilbert of Knight Frank, who is letting the house between Barnet and Hadley Wood.

"But of course, the owner is prepared to make other arrangements. This is an unusual request, although we did have somebody who left a cat with a year's supply of food." The whole business of pets can be fraught, Ms Gilbert says. A great many landlords refuse to have them in their properties. "This can cause an awful lot of upset. Sometimes a family reluctantly uproots and the one way of making the children feel more at home is by having a pet. It is a terrible dilemma if they find the right house and then discover they can't bring their dog to live there."

Hampstead Lettings, Knight Frank: 0171 431 8686.

Hard lessons to learn about moving house

House hunters certain that tiny feet will never patter down their hallways need read no further. Those of you already encumbered, or undecided, should read on. You may have considered every aspect of your future home but do you know where the nearest school is? *Gemma Vedrick* offers some guidance.

Romana Roeg searched for "the perfect house" for nine months. It had to have a side entrance for her landscape gardening business but, more important, had to be near the school of choice for her daughter, Ava.

She found her dream home, in the right borough and only a couple of streets away from the Telegraph Hill school, in south London, but was shocked when Ava didn't get in. She says: "Even though we're close, we're nearer to another school. Ironically, if we'd bought somewhere down the road, and further away, we would have got in because there's no other school nearby."

Ms Roeg found that siblings get first choice and children new

to the area are offered a place at their nearest school, as long as their parents apply. Borough lines are irrelevant. She appealed: "It was horrendous. I felt the headteacher was sitting there grinning like a Cheshire cat knowing we wouldn't get in." Her house no longer felt perfect. Eventually Ms Roeg found a school she liked further away which, happily, had a place for Ava. Her advice to other parents? "Do your research properly."

Stephen and Joy Darwen did their research. They found an idyllic retreat in Coulsdon, in Surrey, with a nearby school for daughters Sara and Ruth. They put their Crystal Palace town house on the market, got a buyer and told the local school that their children were leaving.

When the buyer dropped out the Darwens became nervous. After the second buyer dropped out they panicked. "At the worst point, I registered with 12 estate agents, advertised in every publication going, had a saleboard made and gave A4 colour posters to 30 local shops. A lot of shopkeepers wouldn't put up the posters until they'd looked themselves. They thought I was so desperate it had to be a bargain but even then they didn't want it," says Mr Darwen.

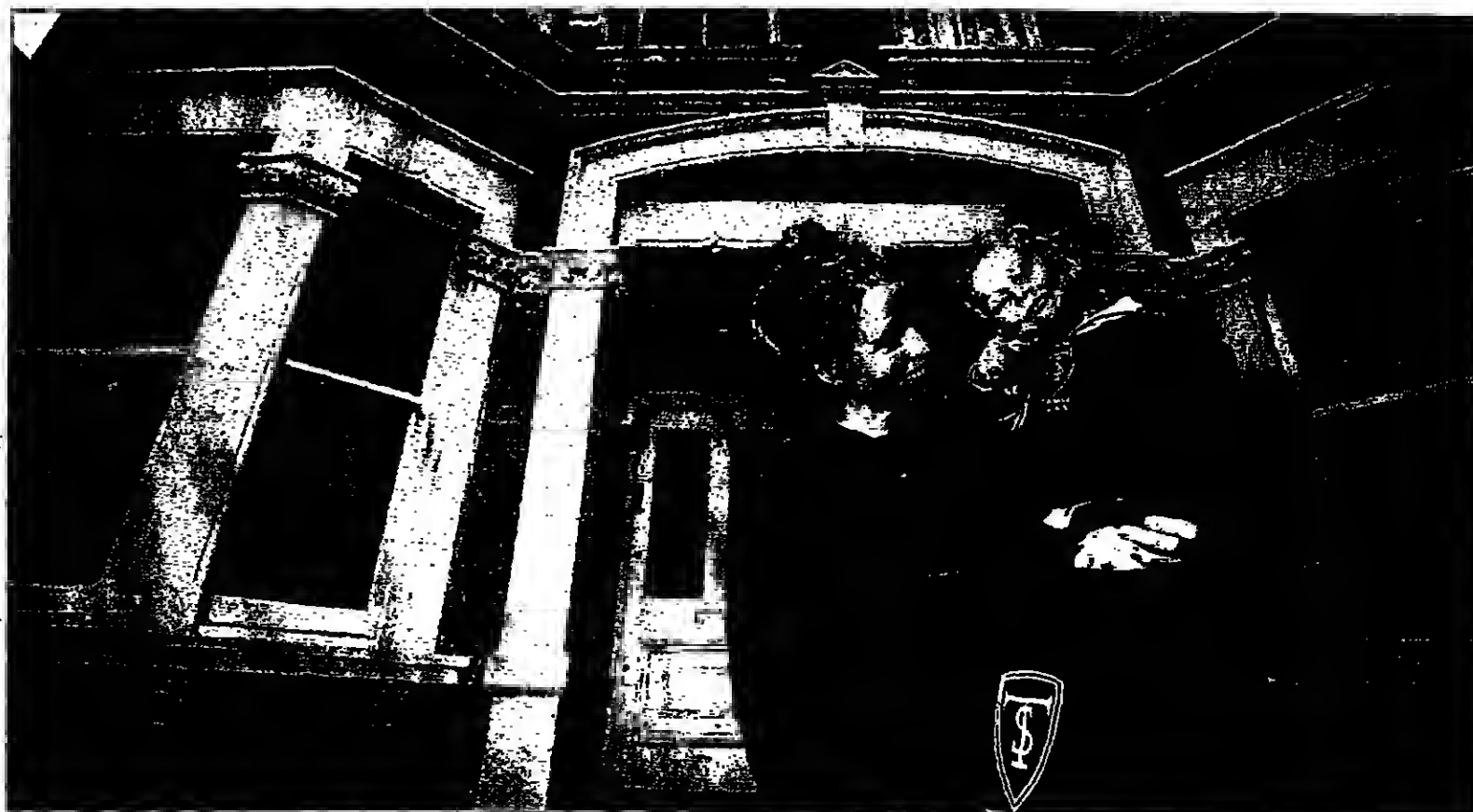
After five buyers dropped

out, Mr Darwen found himself driving halfway across the country in search of the origin of one of the many long chains in which he was involved, but even that didn't help. The Darwens became exhausted by the daily 24-mile trip to the new school. "The children thought it was bizarre. We'd drive past their old school, they'd see their friends and demand 'Why can't we go there?' I just gritted my teeth. I thought it would go on forever," says Joy Darwen. The family finally moved eight months later.

Schools do not generally take children before their housing situation is resolved despite parents' pleas. Peter Coleman, head of Goodrich School, in East Dulwich, London, received over 200 applications for 90 places this year and has seen it all: "Parents show letters from estate agents [or] solicitors. One even slapped his cheque book down and said 'how much?'"

Not even a "donation to school funds" guarantees a place. "We won't consider you until exchange of contracts," Mr Coleman links desperation to the family's particular circumstances: "It's acute when people move into the area with three school-age children and have to find a house and three places simultaneously."

Diana Hamilton at Roy



Romana Roeg found a house near the school she wanted for her daughter, Ava, but was appalled to find she couldn't get in

Peter Macdermid

Brooks, a firm of estate agents with offices in south London, describes buyers who are also looking for schools: "They come in and you can see anxiety on their faces. We've all been there, they're desperate. If you've got a property very near to a good school they'll pay more and be prepared to suffer one room less or a small garden just to get in." In fact, another agent admits that, in its view, it may be cheaper to pay for private schooling rather

than buy an overpriced house for its position.

Parents should be wary of taking estate agents' advice on catchment areas as local authorities use different criteria. Mr Coleman explains: "It's convoluted. Priority areas were abandoned in favour of distance to the school, as people assumed they would get places and didn't."

"We can't offer places to people who live nearer another school." He blames estate agents for misleading parents: "They

advertise houses as being in our 'catchment area' but there's no such thing. Parents buy on the strength of estate agents' blurb and it's just not true." So why say it? "Because it shifts houses," says Mr Coleman.

John Thorogood, a Battersea estate agency, recently got a ticking off from a local school for advertising properties as being in its "catchment area". The marketing ploy was effective as an alternative to "betwixt the commons", but the

school said it could never guarantee places even for houses in the same road.

Parents denied places at schools often sacrifice their homes for education. Mr Coleman tells of parents he's turned down who immediately put their house on the market and others who are prepared to rent just to get in.

Fraudsters should beware: "We catch people who don't live where they say they do and we can withdraw the place." Mr

Coleman meticulously measures the more contentious areas around the school but parents still challenge his measurements for – largely unsuccessful – appeals. As I left Goodrich School an anxious-looking man panted past. I couldn't be certain, but I think he was wearing a pedometer.

John Thorogood: 0171 228 7474; Roy Brooks: 0181 299 3021; Goodrich School: 0181 693 1050.

Divide and drool

The flats will sell for around £250,000 each; the penthouses -

Her work includes a striking etched horse, the contours drawn to look like the man markings for

The trend for dividing screens is filtering down to the more mass market developers, too. Berkeley Homes have found glass panels between kitchen and sitting room in their Jacob's Wharf development popular with buyers. "It's practical

A more portable screen option is the lacquered floor screen frame sold through the Art Room mail order brochure. The three-panel, 69" high folding screen is cut to hold 15 8" x 10" photographs behind glass

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Rockhead, a white-painted stone house in a part-wooded valley 14 miles from the north Devon coast, stands in 57 acres of pasture and woodlands. The four-bedroom house has a summer house and kitchen garden, with apple trees, fruit cage with raspberries, gooseberry, plum and rhubarb, and a stable range and stone barn. A mini estate, the property includes fishing rights on the River Brav. £300,000 through Knight Frank (01392 423111).

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11/PROPERTY

A slow pace wins hands-down in the house-moving race

Boxes, bubble wrap, straps, packing material, paracetamol, Prozac - it's moving day. Plenty of people move home happily, cheaply and successfully with a man and a van, and even with only a van. Others move traumatically with high-priced professionals. Even if you have your act together, others will be clueless. Robert Liebman helps you across the threshold.

Removal-industry insiders have warehouses full of horror stories. Linda Schofield, marketing manager of Pickfords, says that "many people move into a property which they have seen only once. When they arrive they find that there is no room for the cooker, or it fits, but it is a gas cooker, and there is no gas supply."

"There is always stress and always surprises," says Sarah Kampe, the moving force behind Moving Solutions. "For example, our eyes tend to gloss over our kitchen appliances, and it doesn't happen often, but occasionally someone will forget to take their refrigerator or cooker."

Some people move into converted properties which have large rooms and also, they soon discover, unusually narrow corridors. "The rooms themselves are spacious but there is a dogleg turn in the hallway. If you have not arranged for a crane, you end up with a piano or wardrobe with nowhere to go," says Ms Kampe.

Civil war is a common barrier to smooth moves. "Even though a couple is splitting up, you would think that they would at least communicate about the move and who gets what," says Ms Schofield at Pickfords. "But many quarrelling couples use moving day as a sorting day, so it takes twice as long."

Ms Kampe agrees that multiple locations are a recipe for disaster. "When some items are staying and some are going, or furniture is moving to two addresses or some is going into storage, something is certain to end up in the wrong place."

When Ms Kampe handles a move, she verifies the correct completion time. Often the incoming family arrive at noon but the keys aren't available until two or three o'clock. "I've heard of people waiting in the lorry for seven hours."

While waiting, there is generally little to do except cultivate an ulcer. And they are the lucky ones.

Good planning is vital, and 90 per cent of good planning means planning well in advance. Almost everyone grossly underestimates the time and effort needed to pack, and some people take this foible to extremes. William Karlsake, of the south London removers Ward Thomas, remembers one seller who "waited until literally the 11th hour to hire a self-move van and start packing and loading. They were still at it at midnight."

Removal companies need notice to reserve the appropriate lorry. Aside from owning twice as much as you think you do, numerous factors need investigating, including insurance.

Many standard household contents

policies cover removals. But Keith McGregor, assistant household underwriting manager for Royal & Sun Alliance, warns: "Most insurers will insist that brittle and breakable items, like china and other glass items, be packed and moved by professionals. And we anticipate that these items are going into the new premises. Furnishings going into storage are excluded."

Selecting a removal company can be tricky. Ms Kampe notes that it is not enough to obtain several quotes. "You need to find out what is included. Quotes can vary by £1,000 or more. But how many men are included? How large is the lorry? How many trips will be required? Without an-

swers to these questions, you can't compare like with like."

Some variables don't show up in the numbers. "In the busy season the less reputable companies are less discriminating in who they hire," notes Ms Kampe.

Professional removals people know things we don't know, like how to correctly pack delicate items. They have things we don't have, like tail-lift trucks and trolleys.

Large companies such as Pickfords offer a self-move service that includes van hire and packing materials delivered in advance. Pickfords can also arrange for a plumber, electrician, carpenter or other craftsman as part of a full-service move.

And organisations such as Moving Solutions can arrange for just about everything, including advice on local schools and redirecting the post. "I have a huge checklist and cover things people might overlook, like whether a cat flap has to be cut in the new door. We can attend to council tax, photography, telephone, cleaning old and new premises, and arranging plumbing for the washing machine," says Ms Kampe.

If entirely stress-free moves are rare, traumatic relocations are also unusual. With removal companies, size matters, but so does temperament. Mr Karlsake classifies removal companies as "sympathetic or surly". A large sympathetic company can

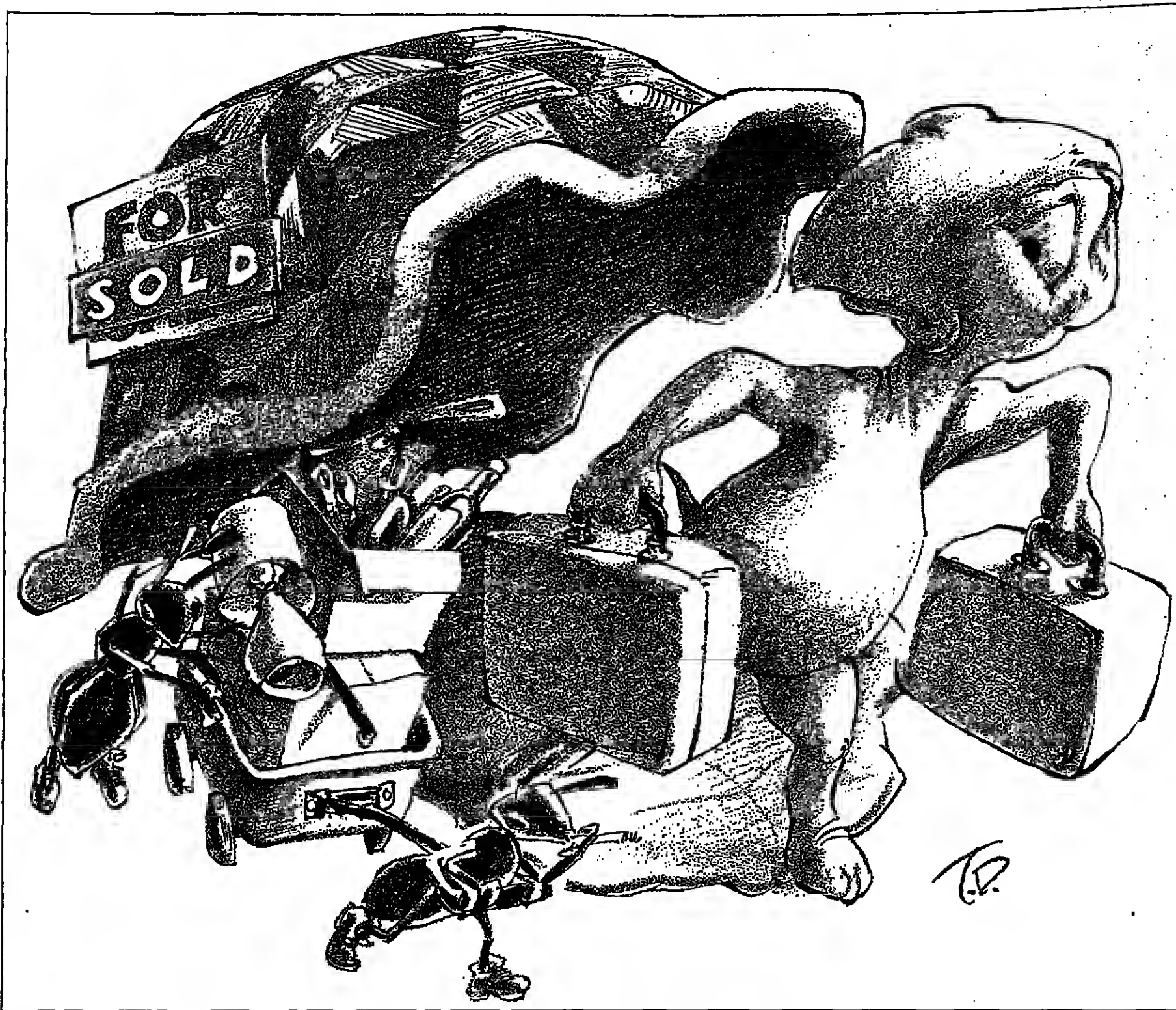
cushion many a hard landing. In the move involving the half-day wait to midnight, "we had other crews who had long finished their jobs and we were able to re-direct them to help us when we finally started unloading."

Worse luck befell a family who arrived at their new home only to discover that the old owner refused to complete. The sale was off. "Except that they had vacated their home and all of their belongings were in the truck in front," says Mr Karlsake.

Quick action on all fronts salvaged the wreck. "Their estate agent immediately found an empty house for them to rent. We delivered some furniture to the rental house and put the rest into storage."

Pickfords' Ms Schofield cautions that "moving is not just being transported from A to B, it is more than lift and shift. It is to get you settled in." Preferably in one piece emotionally as well as physically.

Moving Solutions, 56 Denton Street, London SW18 2JS, 0181 355 4477; Pickfords, Herriage House, 345 Southbury Road, Enfield EN1 1UP, 0181 219 8000; Ward Thomas Removals, 13 Abbey Business Centre, Ingate Place, London SW8 3NS, 0171 498 0144; 13a Heath Street, London NW3 6TP; 0171 794 0000; Association of British Insurers, 51 Gresham Street, London EC2V 7HQ, 0171 600 3333.



Is your mortgage a source of stress?

Have you really got the mortgage you wanted? Judging by the number of complaints from borrowers about their lenders' practices, particularly over discrepancies in charges, perhaps not. Ian Morse weighs up the evidence.

Each bank and building society has its own internal complaints procedure for dealing with borrowers who have a grievance. Once this procedure is completed, and if the borrower remains unsatisfied by any compensation they have been offered, the case can be taken either to the Bank or Building Society ombudsman. Those dealing with an intermediary, such as a mortgage broker, can take their complaint to the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators.

Last year, the Banking Ombudsman received 775 mortgage-related complaints, of which 109 were fully investigated, with half of these resulting in awards to the borrower in excess of those first proposed by the banks in question. Meanwhile, the Building Society Ombudsman received 5,000 mortgage complaints for the year 1995-96. Of these, 173 concerned discrepancies on mortgage payments, and a further 218 covered cases that included computer error.

But the real figures may never be known since the ac-

tual level of complaints made is higher. Complaints made direct to a lender which then offers compensation accepted by a borrower need not be reported to the relevant Ombudsman. But in adjudicating a case, the Ombudsman can look beyond legal requirements to what is fair or reasonable when considering a particular case.

Chris Eadie, deputy Bank Ombudsman, says: "The onus is on the lender to make the terms of a mortgage as clear as possible. Annual statements should include the term of your mortgage, as well as any charges and changes to interest rates during the year."

Mr Eadie adds: "While a building society might have handled things one way, after they convert to bank status a different corporate culture may prevail."

In particular, he is concerned about the rising number of cases which result from a mortgage term being lengthened after the account has gone into temporary arrears, where borrowers are not first asked if they would like to pay more instead.

Mr Eadie advises borrowers to look carefully at their annual mortgage statement: "[This is] the consumer's first line of defence." But some lenders do not include enough information on these statements to enable borrowers to check whether their payments are correct.

All large mortgage lenders in the UK, whether banks or building societies, are members

of the Council of Mortgage Lenders (CML). Since earlier this year, the CML has operated a Mortgage Code which includes a commitment by members to "help you to understand how your mortgage account works" and "correct errors and handle complaints speedily."

Elsewhere, the code specifies: "If there have been any significant changes (to your mortgage) in one year, we will give you or send you a copy of the new terms and conditions or a summary of changes."

The Mortgage Code has only been in existence since July of this year, and is due for review at its first anniversary. At present, membership of the CML is in effect two tier, with full membership open to mortgage lenders, and associate membership open to other firms with significant involvement in this market. However, full membership will be open to mortgage intermediaries, such as brokers and financial advisers, from next spring.

Statements by some large lenders, including Abbey National, Barclays and Midland Bank, do not include the interest rates charged. Instead, lenders need only give notice of rate changes by advertising them in newspapers and branches, or posting out notice of changes when they occur. Some lenders, again including Abbey National, do not make it clear on the annual statement whether a mortgage is on a repayment or interest-only basis. Most do not give the outstanding mortgage term.

Sue Anderson, at the CML,

admits: "The code does not specify what information should be included in an annual statement, because we don't want to be too prescriptive." But she adds: "There is no compulsion on members to enforce the code in a uniform way. After all, [we are] a trade association."

Ms Anderson is unwilling to comment on whether the CML will ask members to introduce a uniform standard of disclosure on annual mortgage statements. Meanwhile, it is better to check than be overcharged.

Sorting out all the information you require to check whether your statement is correct may necessitate contacting your lender by phone or letter.

Typical information you need to know includes:

- The balance of your loan outstanding at the start and end of the period covered by your annual statement.
- Any changes in interest rates over the period and when they were applied to your loan.
- Any changes in the balance of the loan within the period.
- The amount of any charges (home insurance, for example) other than interest or capital on the loan made through monthly payments.
- The amount of any administrative charges which may be debited to your account as separate items.
- Anyone with arrears on their account should also confirm whether or not the remaining term of their mortgage has been extended.



'My loan jumped from 25 years to 35 without my consent'

Simon Williams has a mortgage with Abbey National. This is his story.

"In 1991, I took out a 25-year repayment mortgage with the Abbey National for £33,375. In August this year, I went to a local branch to check out my account details. Purely by chance I was allowed to look at my account details on the mortgage adviser's monitor, and saw my outstanding mortgage term was given as 34 years and eight months."

After six weeks of waiting, Abbey explained that although the contract had been for a 25-year repayment mortgage, they had set up the loan on an interest-only basis, with a 60-year term. They went on to admit: "This was identified in 1993, when the computer system re-calculated all extended terms to 35 years." At no time did I receive any notification of these changes, which had been carried out without my consent. Abbey National wrote: "It should have been clear that your outstanding balance was not decreasing as you expected."

But with a repayment mortgage, I expected the first few years of monthly payments would mainly meet interest charges rather than capital repayment.

Abbey's end-of-year statements made no mention of type of mortgage, interest-rate changes, or outstanding term. I [complained and] was offered £326.63 against excess interest paid on the account, plus £500 towards the capital sum. Abbey wrote to me again in November this year, saying my case might take time to investigate, and asking me to suggest a figure for final compensation as part of an "experiment being carried out this month".

But I intend taking this case to the Banking Ombudsman, unless they re-instate my original mortgage. What worries me most is that all this only came to light by chance, and then my persistence in pursuing the matter. Finally, I am still awaiting a full breakdown of my account details."

Mr Williams' case is now being dealt with by Abbey National's secretariat, which has responsibility for investigating complaints in the final stage of the bank's complaint procedure. Ian Hart, manager of the secretariat, refuses to comment on the case but says the so-called experiment of asking complainants to suggest a compensation figure is standard practice and was not just "being carried out this month".

